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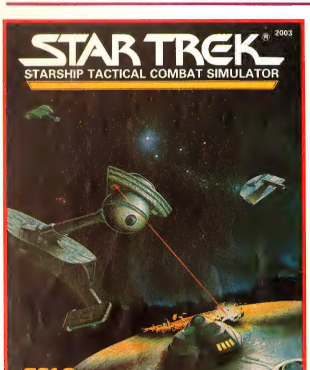

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WORD BALLOONS

On the 86th Floor

The Empire State Building seemed like an appropriate place. Once the tallest manmade structure in the world, it is truly a meeting place of legends. Doc Savage used to have a suite of offices here. And King Kong hung around, checking out floor space before opting to build on Skull Island.

But we aren't looking to relocate. We're here for a different purpose this day, August 9, well after deadline (but who's counting?). Viacom Enterprises is hosting a press conference re: their new TV series, *Superboy* (see page 24). And all the big-time media are here: *TV Guide*, *USA Today*, COMICS SCENE.

OK, so our offices are only four blocks away. Still, CSQ Managing Editor Dan Dickholtz and I hobnob with DC Comics' *Superman* editor Mike Carlin, fellow DC editor Andy Helfer and DC publisher Jenette Kahn. Then, Viacom exec Henry Schlieff and series producer Ilya Salkind take the podium to, in turn, discuss the *Superboy* project and *why* it will fly.

He emerges. The guy we've been waiting for. The man of the hour. Our new hero. He's tall, dark, handsome—wearing thick glasses and a bulky sweater (on a typical summer '88 90-degree day?). It's, as I hear one of the more mainstream press whisper, a nerd alert. Love those mainstream press folks, don't you?

The guy in the glasses talks a bit about himself—he's a young actor named John Haymes Newton—and then he swears us all to secrecy. He has an "off-the-record" revelation, a reason why he's wearing this bulky sweater and it just can't be printed . . . if this secret should *ever* fall into the wrong hands, it could mean ruin for all and good times for Lex Luthor.

John Haymes Newton unbuttons his sweater to reveal—no, I'm sorry we *can't* tell you, journalistic integrity and all that. But you can certainly guess. Let me give you a hint: It has something to do with truth, justice and the American way—and dressing for super-success.

After the press conference, Dan and I linger to talk to Newton, Kahn and Ilya Salkind (who remembers the original COMIC SCENE's *Superman* film coverage quite well). And of course, we get to meet the vivacious Stacy Haiduk, the young actress chosen to portray Lana Lang.

Well, gosh, hem, haw, tie my tongue up with shyness, is she enchanting?! With all due respect to Margot Kidder, Noel Neill and Phyllis Coates, I *can't* understand why Super-errr Clark Kent would ever go for Lois Lane with such a charming Lana Lang around. Stacy Haiduk certainly does have star quality.

What's more, she's a comics fan ("I read *Wonder Woman*")—as is Newton (who strangely preferred *Superman* comics to *Superboy*—and has conferred with Kahn, Carlin, Helfer & former *Superman* scribe Cary Bates to bone up on areas of the supermythos he doesn't know). And for us, that's the truly nice part of this syndicated series—two personable actors are bringing Clark Kent and Lana Lang to life. In John Haymes Newton and Stacy Haiduk, the series producers have found two people who seem to *really* care about the characters and the comics. We look forward to their adventures.

Briefly, a conflict of interest note: CSQ writer Bob Miller is also a talented artist. He wrote the *Beany & Cecil* piece on page 45. After he turned it in (and indeed, *after* it was on its way to the printer), *Beany & Cecil*'s John Kricfalusi called Miller. Remembering him from the CSQ interview weeks earlier, Kricfalusi had also noted some of Miller's artwork published elsewhere. And that's how Kricfalusi came to hire Miller—now relocated to LA—as a layout artist to work on *Beany & Cecil*. Good going, Bobby boy!

And finally in our Official Lucky Writer Department: As you may have noticed, Peter David, a brilliant comics writer, has been mentioned or quoted so far in *each* issue of CSQ! Why? Because he makes us laugh. And think. And he's a good luck symbol to us—as you'll see below in the news in our next issue box. Anyhow, we've learned that in addition to writing good comics, Peter David sings a mean version (in public yet) of "Secret Agent Man." We thought inquiring minds would like to know.

—David McDonnell/Editor

COMICS SCENE RETURNS in 1989 with (at least) four more issues. Yep, we're pleased, too (and thanks for your support). So, expect further forays with the new live-action **Superboy** . . . the movie muck-monster known as **Swamp Thing** . . . and the long-awaited film version of **The Batman**. Plus, a tribute to the man behind **Mickey Mouse** and a few thought balloons from **Frank Miller** and others. It's all part of **COMICS SCENE #6, on sale circa February 1989. Keep watching the newsstands!!**

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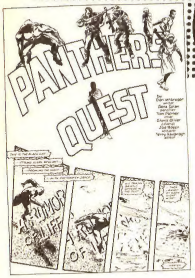
COMICS SCENE



"Panther's Quest"

I was very reluctant to come back to this character after, so many years," says Don McGregor, writer of the Black Panther serial set to begin in *Marvel Comics Presents* #13.

The tale represents McGregor's return to a character he had made his own back in the mid-1970s. However, he says that this multi-part story, known as "Panther's Quest," is an adventure he had planned for quite some time. "As long as 12 years ago, I had intended to write about apartheid and South Africa, but I felt back then that I didn't know enough about it. So, it went on the back burner. When the opportunity came, I took it."

But why should the king of Wakanda go to the troubled land of South Africa? "The Panther is on a personal mission, one with a great deal of emotional content for him," McGregor replies. "The way the political situation in South Africa affects his quest is his story.

"He's looking for his mother. The Panther's mother has *never* been written about. Is she alive or dead? Why wasn't she around when he was growing up?"

The artist for the Panther's stint in *Marvel Comics Presents* is Gene Colan (see page 33), who has worked with McGregor on several projects, including *Detectives, Inc. II* for Eclipse and both *Nathaniel Dusk* mini-series for DC.

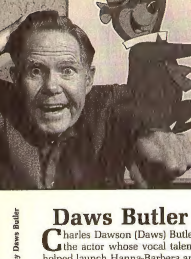
"In the course of the adventure story, Don tries to get across a message about what a waste apartheid is," Colan notes. "You don't see many well-written message stories anymore; usually it's all blood-and-thunder and action. But Don has put a lot of thought into this. Whenever he writes, he does a great deal of research so he knows what he's talking about."

McGregor returns the compliment. "Gene's doing a wonderful job on this story. His interpretation of the Black Panther is very effective. I really like the way the character looks.

"We'll deal with apartheid as accurately as we can," McGregor comments. "The Black Panther is not performing as a hero, going in to resolve apartheid. It's a story of a son searching for his mother."

—*Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

THE PANTHER'S FANCY FOOTWORK DOESN'T SPOIL WHAT FOR GENE COLAN IS "A WELL-WRITTEN MESSAGE STORY."
YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE LOOK ON HIS FACE WHEN I TOLD HIM I WAS GOING TO SOUTH AFRICA!
I'M TRYING TO FIND MY MOTHER!
YOU'RE GOING TO SOUTH AFRICA TO FIND YOUR MOTHER?



Butler Photo: Vanguard Photography/Courtesy Daws Butler

Daws Butler

Charles Dawson (Daws) Butler, the actor whose vocal talents helped launch Hanna-Barbera animation studios and whose many characterizations entertained generations of cartoon fans, died May 18 in Los Angeles of cardiac arrest at age 71.

The 5'2" actor was born in Toledo, Ohio and grew up outside Chicago. After high school, he performed as a vocal impersonator in amateur shows and night clubs. Following a stint in the US Naval Reserve during World War II, Butler moved to California to work as a writer and performer in radio and on Time *for Beany*, the TV puppet show that preceded the *Beany & Cecil* cartoon program.

During his five years on *Beany*, Butler met comedian Stan Freberg and the two later wrote and produced St. George *and the Dragonet*, a Jack Webb spoof that became the first comedy album to sell more than one million copies. Butler, Freberg and June (Natasha) Foray also produced a series of popular children's records.

In 1957, Butler began his long association with Hanna-Barbera. For years, Butler and Don Messick served as HB's two-man stock company. In a 1986 interview with STARLOG's Brian Lowry, Butler said their collaboration was "almost like jazz, I would do something as Yogi Bear, then Don would ad-lib a Boo-Boo line saying the ranger wouldn't like it, and that would make Yogi even more adamant. It was the type of performing I really love."

The voice of so many childhood friends spent most of his last years out of the performing limelight, doing only occasional voices for Hanna-Barbera and Quaker Oats cereal commercials. The bulk of his time was spent passing on his considerable talent and skills, teaching acting workshops, writing short skits, and tutoring young actors in both physical acting and voicing. More than 300 actors studied with Butler throughout the last decade.

It is Daws Butler's voices that remain: dozens of supporting characters on *The Flintstones*, *The Jetsons*, *Aesop and Son*, *Fractured Fairy Tales*, and MGM, Jay Ward and Walter Lantz cartoons . . . Heis (of Pixie & Dixie) and Mr. Jinks . . . Augie Doggie . . . Hokey Wolf . . . countless commercials and incidental voices . . . Chilly Willy . . . Wally Gator . . . Beany and Cap'n Huffenpuff (of *Beany & Cecil*) . . . Smedley the Dog . . . Reddy (of Ruff 'n' Reddy) . . . Lippy the Lion . . . Snap (of Snap, Crackle &

Terry Art: Milton Caniff/Copyright Chicago Tribune-NY News Syndicate

Terry Lee (center), the Dragon Lady (center left) and the rest of the Pirates who made the late Milton Caniff's strip so popular.

Pop) . . . Elroy Jetson . . . Quick Draw McGraw & Baba Louie . . . and Snaggelpuss . . . and Captain Crunch . . . and ol' Huckleberry Hound . . . and most importantly, Yogi Bear.

"I never really hungered to be on camera or be recognized in public," Butler told STARLOG. "What I ended up doing, the voicing, is all I *ever* wanted to do."

—*John Sayers*

Milton Caniff

Milton Caniff, creator of the comic strips *Terry and the Pirates* and *Steve Canyon*, died of lung cancer April 3 at his home in Manhattan. He was 81.

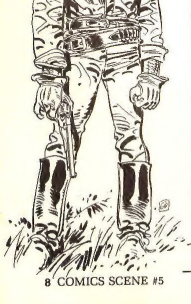
Caniff started drawing comics for the Associated Press in the late 1920s and early '30s. There, he created *Dickie Dare*, the adventures of a young boy in the world of fiction.

He would take that concept of a boy's adventures to his next creation, *Terry and the Pirates*, which began in 1934, syndicated by The

Captain Easy Art: Leslie Turner/Copyright NEA Service

Without the original star of the strip, Leslie Turner was free to send Captain Easy wherever he chose, especially into the arms of strange women.

The Blueberry West



Lt. Blueberry Art: Jean Giraud/Copyright 1974 Charlton-Giraud

Next year, the American West—as envisioned by French artist Jean "Moebius" Giraud (CSQ #3)—comes alive at Marvel Comics.

Marvel will be publishing five Lt. Blueberry books (each comprising approximately two of the original French volumes) from the on-going Western saga created by Giraud and writer Jean-Michel Charlier in 1963. The 96-page editions are: *Chihuahua Pearl*, *Ballad for a Coffin* (120 pages), *Angel Face*, *The Ghost Tribe* and *The End of the Trail*. Together, these five volumes (completed between 1970 and 1988) detail an alternate Western history in which renegade Confederates armed with stolen gold plot a New South and a crazed general plots to assassinate President Grant.

The Blueberry Westerns will accompany another Moebius project at Marvel in 1989. Following their *Silver Surfer* collaboration (CSQ #4), Stan Lee and Moebius will reteam on *The Inmate*, a new science-fiction tale featuring all-new, non-Marvel characters.

—*David McDonnell*

Leslie Turner

Leslie Turner, the man who took over the seriocomic adventure strip *Wash Tubbs* and turned it into the even more successful *Captain Easy*, died in March at age 88.

The history of *Captain Easy* is very nearly the history of the adventure comic strip itself. Beginning as *Wash Tubbs* in 1923, the strip was cast in the comedic slice-of-life mold. But in 1924, creator Roy Crane sent Wash out on a hair-raising adventure. The syndicate, NEA, wasn't happy with the shift in storyline, and it would be another two years before *Wash Tubbs* permanently became a humorous adventure strip. In 1929, during an adventure in Central Europe, Wash met the mysterious Captain Easy, a down-on-his-luck adventurer who took over the Sunday version in 1933 and slowly became the center of the daily strip as well.

During World War II, Easy worked for the OSS, while Wash stayed at home. Eventually, with the strip now bearing Easy's name, Wash became a supporting character in the series that once was his. After the war, *Captain Easy* seemed to find it harder and harder to find adventure, and although the strip remained fun to read, the comedic elements began to dominate again.

The Texas-born Turner was Roy Crane's assistant on *Tubbs* from 1937 until Crane left the strip to create *Buzz Sawyer* in 1943. Turner continued on the daily version, while the Sunday, already titled *Captain Easy*, was written and drawn by other hands. Turner changed the name of the daily to match the Sunday in the early 1940s. In 1952, he took over the Sunday page as well, writing and drawing both versions until 1960, when Turner again dropped the Sunday page, giving it to Mel Graff. Turner retired from *Captain Easy* in 1970, and the strip is now written and drawn by Jim Lawrence and Bill Crooks.

—*Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

Steve Canyon Art: Milton Caniff/Kitchen Sink Press

Chicago Tribune-New York News Syndicate, *Terry* told the story of young Terry Lee, his guardian Pat Ryan, and their Chinese friend Connie (George Washington Confucius) in China during the shift from colonial control through World War II. In time, Terry would join the American Air Corps and go on to a career in the service.

In addition to the three leads, *Terry* introduced many other classic characters to comics, including the sometimes heroic, sometimes villainous Dragon Lady; tramp with a heart of gold Burma; small-statured but big-egoed pilot Hot-Shot Charlie Charles; and small-time - dealmaker Chopstick Joe.

During World War II, Caniff also produced *Male Call*, starring Miss Lace, a strip filled with fairly innocent sexual innuendo, for the G.I. newspaper *Stars & Stripes*.

At its height, Caniff's *Terry* appeared in more than 300 newspapers, and reportedly earned its creator some $75,000 a year. But, unhappy that the strip was owned by the Tribune-News syndicate and not himself, Caniff left *Terry* in 1947 to begin *Steve Canyon* for Field Enterprises. Caniff retained ownership of *Canyon*.

Over the years, Caniff's artistic style, utilizing shadow as well as line to define forms, was adopted by other well-known comic artists, who together became unofficially known as a "Caniff School." Among them were Lee Elias, best known for the *Blade Cut* feature at Harvey Comics and the syndicated strip *Beyond Mars*, and Frank Robbins, creator of *Johnny Hazard* and a writer and artist on *Batman* in the 1970s.

Caniff received many honors in his over half-century in the comics field, including a lifetime post as honorary chairman of the National Cartoonists Society, honorary member of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society, and three honorary doctorates. One of his Sunday *Terry* pages, in which Col. Flip Corkin impresses on Flight Officer Terry Lee the importance of the war effort, was read into the *Congressional Record*.

Caniff's wife, Esther (known as Bunny), died just 39 days after Caniff himself.

King Features, currently syndicating *Steve Canyon*, has announced that no effort will be made to find a replacement for Caniff, and that the strip will end when the material that Caniff and his assistants, Dick Rockwell and Shel Dorf, completed runs out.

—*Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

On the Blue Side of the Moon

The days of pomp and glory are drawing to a close for the citizens of Attilan, the city deep within the Moon's Blue Area. "The *Inhumans* Graphic Novel is about the *dethroning* of their royal family, the idea that they had reached a point where certain traditions were being carried on with their meaning having been lost, and also the issue of women's rights in terms of abortion," explains Ann Nocenti, author of the project drawn by Bret Blevins and Al Williamson.

"When Medusa gets pregnant, the Genetics Council orders the child killed because they *hadn't* approved that genetic mixing," she details. "Black Bolt follows the Council's decision because that's the way things have always been, but Medusa takes off to Earth. That event is the catalyst for all the Inhumans to fall off of their high and mighty thrones, and by the novel's end, the Inhumans feel *very* inhuman."

Medusa's impending delivery may seem somewhat sudden, but the gestation actually began four years ago, at a time when hardly anyone at Marvel had any interest in conceiving new adventures for the Inhumans. "I don't know why. I thought they were just great," says Nocenti. "Jack Kirby's designs are just *wonderful*, and there was something pretty intense there. I was given carte blanche with their personalities,

Inhumans Art: Bret Blevins/Al Williamson/Trademark & Copyright 1988 Marvel Entertainment Group

Will Black Bolt keep his peace with what the Genetics Council have planned for his unborn child?

and so I gave Karnak an intellect to the point that it hinders him, Medusa's whole problem with always taking all the blame, what it did to Bolt to be told at a young age never to speak and what a time bomb that created, and Gorgon who seems to be brutish and carnal, but has a real intelligence. All the clues are there visually. It's a really well-designed jigsaw."

—*Daniel Dickholtz*

Photo: Courtesy Edward Summer

Uncle Scrooge Turns 40

Scrooge McDuck, the world's richest duck, turns 40 this year. The famous Walt Disney character, created by Carl Barks, celebrates his birthday with *Uncle Scrooge: His Life and Times* (Celestial Arts, 376 pages, $34.95 paper, $59.95 cloth).

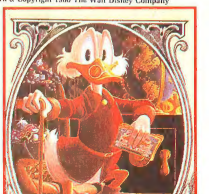
This book is a reprint of the original 1981 edition published in honor of Barks' 80th birthday, which has been much sought after, fetching prices of up to $250. It's as much a tribute to Carl Barks as it is an informal biography of Scrooge McDuck. Edited by Edward Summer, the book begins with "Back to the Klondike," as Scrooge, Donald and the boys journey through a series of 12 inspiring tales of excitement and adventure including "Seven Cities of Cibola," "Land Beneath the Ground" and across Africa in "The Second Richest Duck."

This new edition includes an updated checklist of Scrooge stories and a new afterward entitled "Cosmological Correspondence." According to the letters, some duck fans at the Center for Radiophysics and Space Research at Cornell University arranged to have a newly discovered asteroid named after Carl Barks. Apparently, such stories as "Island in the Sky" and "Micro-Ducks from Outer Space" (included in the book) served as inspiration for more than a few young astronomers' careers.

In a letter of appreciation to the Uncle Scrooge & Duck Characters: Trademark & Copyright 1988 The Walt Disney Company

Cornell astronomers, Barks says: "I used to look up at the night sky when I was a boy in smogfree eastern Oregon, and I reflected even then on the awesome permanence of those millions of glittering objects. To realize that now one of those objects is named for me boggles my mind. (2730) Barks will still be up there circling the sun eons after the Big Apple and Hollywood's terrazzo 'stars' and I have become dust specks blowing the winds of infinity. I hope that the moral that I gently preached in my story of 'Island in the Sky' lives on into the forevermess to help Earth people meet their far-off neighbors with a handshake instead of a blast with a ray gun."

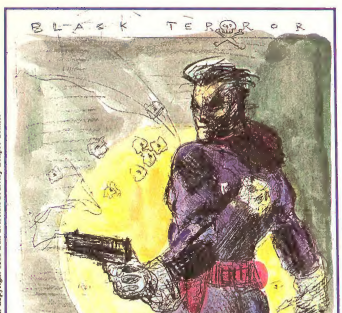
—*David Hutchison*



Art: Carl Barks

WALT DISNEY'S
UNCLE SCROOGE
ISLAND IN THE SKY
IN DUCKBURG SCIENCE WAS ADVANCED MUCH FARTHER THAN IN OTHER CITIES OF THE WORLD!
WE HAVE THINGS HERE THAT ARE ONLY DREAMS IN THE REST OF THE WORLD!
FLYING BUSES!
JUMPING BUTTONS!

Art: Carl Barks



All Black Terror Art: Copyright 1988 Dan Brereton/Courtesy Eclipse Comics

When "Black Terror" Strikes

Artist Dan Brereton sheds some early light on the Black Terror.

Murderers, rapists, drug dealers and hoodlums run the streets, innocents are being slaughtered, and all apparently with government sanctioning. Corruption has become so pervasive that one of history's most notorious mobsters has even been elected to high office. Is it any wonder that co-writers Beau Smith and Chuck Dixon have decided to strike *The Black Terror* into the hearts of criminals?

"The Black Terror exists in an alternate universe to ours," Dixon explains. "It's a world where the Mafia has become a *legitimate* entity, more like a political party. They aren't perceived as the criminal organization they actually are; it's something normal, like you would join the Rotary. Al Capone eventually became the Vice President. That's the sort of crime situation that the Black Terror must face, a world-spanning criminal conspiracy."

"It's going to be a very hard-boiled crime story," notes Smith. "He's going to be what characters like Wolverine or Batman could *never* be due to licensing and being on every kid's lunchbox. He is going to be *the* scariest thing—the boogeyman to crime. Criminals actually sleep with one eye open because this guy might be around. All they know about him is he gets the job done, he doesn't get caught, and their people usually get hurt along the way."

A fan of the Black Terror's Golden Age exploits since his childhood, Smith nevertheless admits that, with the exception of some stories by Jerry Robinson and Mort Meskin, those early tales were "pretty much run-of-the-mill."

Fans still have a few months to wait before they see the Black Terror. Crooks an alternate universe away can only pray they have that much time left.

"The Black Terror was not the most promising character in the world," Dixon agrees. "His costume belied his true personality, which was just another superhero. His promise was never fulfilled."

Consequently, almost all his past continuity has been jettisoned, although certain aspects of his Golden Age heritage will still resurface.

"Most of the old characters who used to appear in *Exciting Comics* with him, Pyro-Man, Doc Strange and a few others, were part of this elite underground anti-crime organization that Eliot Ness came up with," says Smith. "The others had fallen by the wayside either by death, corruption or other means. Only the Black Terror is left.

"Finally, he decides that the only way to defeat this cancer in the body of American is to inject himself *into* it. He does in a couple of small-time thugs during a crime, and instead of turning one of the bodies over to the police, he takes over that identity until they either find him out or it serves his purpose. So, it finally works out that he's Ryan Delvecchio, pretty high up the organized crime ladder now, and he is handpicked for a Mafia hit squad that takes care of competition. This works out well for the Black Terror in that he's offing other bad guys. It puts him in the right place at the right time."

However, despite all the hard-hitting action, which begins early next year at Eclipse Comics, Chuck Dixon notes, "He's *not* a man driven by revenge. We didn't want him to be at all like the Punisher or any of the other crime-fighting characters. The Black Terror's a man driven basically by love of his country, a man facing a real uphill battle."

—*Daniel Dickholtz*

All Black Orchid Art: Dave McKean/Copyright 1988 DC Comics Inc.

Garden of the Black Orchid

More than a decade ago, the Black Orchid blossomed onto the scene, hurtling from one brief *Adventure* to the next and always keeping her true identity and powers a secret. Even after being transplanted to the mainstream DC Universe and forced to fight in the Crisis and to join up with everyone from the Super Friends to the Suicide Squad, the flowery fighter's mysteries lingered.

But writer Neil Gaiman and artist David McKean have put themselves on her case, and the three Prestige Format issue-long trail begins with the botanical beauty's corpse! Who done it and who was she, anyway? Find out when *The Black Orchid* blooms.

for Moore

Busy scrawling a "V for Vendetta" against political evil-doers, Alan Moore can't spare the time to go to the movies.

By DANIEL DICKHOLTZ

When Alan Moore first set his masked anarchist, V, on a vendetta against a near future's Nozi-like government, he had no idea how many fans would be there with England's shores. Faced with intruding video cameras, encroaching censorship and laws passed with the purpose of putting an end to the British gay community, Moore could only respond by pouring his [illegible] into the concluding chapters of his DC mini-series and into A.A.R.G.H., a benefit book that also launched his own company, Mad Love Publishing. And with another related [illegible] he still prefers to stay [illegible] bedfellow in comics, a medium he still prefers to any other.

COMICS SCENE: How would you characterize the third book of *V for Vendetta*? Will it be harsher than the preceding chapters?

ALAN MOORE: Let me see. The third book has probably got just a few more bodies than the last act of *Hamlet*. (Chuckles.) I wouldn't say it was harsher, in many ways, it's the most optimistic of the three. That perhaps sounds like a paradox in light of what I have said, but I suppose that once you've gone through the initial depression of confronting these problems in [illegible] order to just keep yourself active and useful as an artist and a human being, you must find some way to see beyond the problems.

I've always been a moralist, a morality fable. I took moral and absolute political principles like anarchy and fascism, embodied them in comic-book characters and in this very basic futuristic world, and let them stage a little morality play as much for my own edification as anyone else's. That way, you could actually see these abstract concepts work out their differences in a very visual and lively way and examine the problems by analogy. In light of that, [illegible] is exciting to [illegible] suggest possibilities beyond the ones currently facing us. I don't know whether they are particularly practical or wise or informed, but emotionally, the third book seems right to me. It ends, after three books of unremitting gloom, on a ray of optimism.

CS: As for V himself, I understand that a good deal of what goes on with him came about when David Lloyd suggested the Guy Fawkes mask.

MOORE: Yeah. We experimented with several visual possibilities for V. In some of them I wanted to dress him in a military uniform and wore facial [illegible] Suddenly Dave sent along the picture of someone in a Guy Fawkes mask wearing a tall, conical, pointed hat. Guy Fawkes, remember, Guy Fawkes was part of a plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament. He was drawn, quartered and burned. I believe, as punishment, and in celebration of this, British children every November 5th, burn a straw-stuffed Guy dummy and let off fireworks, similar to your July 4th celebrations, although I think it has always been a bit unclear whether we're celebrating the death of Guy Fawkes or his attempt to blow up Parliament. But when Dave suggested that, it somehow [illegible] image, this perpetually smiling face. Its expression never changes, but it can somehow become pregnant with a number of meanings. In that respect, it [illegible] at the center of this mystery.

CS: What's the greatest challenge in writing a character like V?

MOORE: We decided that he would speak in a sort of heavy, roundabout, cryptic fashion, that nothing he said would be untrue, but it might not be literal. This enabled us to give V dialogue which would have no apparent meaning to begin with but within a couple of episodes, it would start to take on all sorts of subliminal sinister undertones. The main thing was writing dialogue that displayed a proper sort of craziness. I've written a number of crazy people in my time, but it's nothing [illegible] perhaps more unusual in that he's a deranged terrorist. But I had to actually think my way into his head to the point where I could sympathize with him, and could agree with his actions. This is not to say that I do agree with V's actions all the time, but for the purpose of writing him, I had to get myself into a state of mind where I could quite easily think in the same terms that V would think in. That was the most difficult thing. Once I achieved [illegible] progressively easier. You could think what V would do in that circumstance and snap into that mode of thinking. You would know when he would blow something up and when he would simply leave a rose or play a gramophone [illegible] when to do them, but it's like that with any character that any writer gets involved with.

All Watchmen Art: Dave Gibbons/Trademark & Copyright 1986 DC Comics Inc.

Art: Bill Sienkiewicz

Alan Moore and Bill Sienkiewicz invite the reader to enter a political arena that has only recently been *Brought to Light*.

"Writing crazy people is nothing that you ever learn to do," Moore admits. "The craziness of Rorschach in *Watchmen* is a long, long way away from the very florid, Shakespearean craziness exhibited by V."

CS: Considering how you've described *V for Vendetta* and what you're doing with *A.A.R.G.H.*, are you planning on doing any other politically-oriented projects?

MOORE: Yeah. I'm working upon a book that will be co-published by Eclipse and Warner Books that's entitled *Brought to Light*, half of which will be done by me and Bill Sienkiewicz, and half by Joyce Brabner and Tom Yeates. Basically, *Brought to Light* is a book which we're doing with the Christic Institute, a law firm operating out of Washington, D.C. who have a pretty impeccable track record of taking on big, difficult cases and winning them. They won a settlement for Karen Silkwood's estate, which was quite historic and I think it was the first time that an atomic power company had been made legally responsible for the health of its workers. They also won damages against the Ku Klux Klan for shooting some civil rights demonstrators in Greensboro.

Currently, they're taking on a somewhat larger organization known as the Secret Team. As defined by the Christic Institute, the Secret Team is a group of fairly shadowy CIA-affiliated personnel who have—in one form or another over the past 25 years—been working behind the scenes of American and world politics, who have been involved in everything from Cuba to heroin smuggling, from Vietnam to arms deals with Iran. At the moment, all their activities are centered upon Central America. Many of the names in this book are probably familiar to you from the Contragate hearings, like Richard Secord, Oliver North, John Poindexter, John Singlaub. The veracity of the Christic's case may be best demonstrated by the fact that these names were being mentioned in the Insitute's news handouts six months *before* they were mentioned anywhere else in the American press. I mean, it seems to me that these people are on the money. Their case, which will be coming up at the Supreme Court this summer, is based, I believe, entirely upon information that's already in the public domain or upon sworn testimony, which makes it pretty solid.

That was something that I was in-

The face of American involvement in Central America is just one of many things that will be *Brought to Light* this November, thanks to Eclipse and Warner Books.

Art: Bill Sienkiewicz

Brought to Light Material: Copyright 1988 Moore/Sienkiewicz & Courtesy Eclipse Comics

terested in doing because it seems to me that one possible direction for comics is their use as a means of political information. It strikes me that most people these days wouldn't read a page of political analysis if their lives depended upon it, as some times it might very well do. People will only read it if it's dragged down to the gutter level of Gary Hart and Donna Rice. Politics is in danger of becoming a quantum science that is beyond the grasp of the ordinary man or woman in the street, a thing which most people would tend to think that they weren't really informed enough to have an opinion about and that it might be best left to the big boys who understand these things. That's a very dangerous situation. Comics, which have an inherently sensationalistic and entertaining appeal, are capable of getting over quite detailed points of fact, quite subtle intellectual or moral points in a way which people can absorb. The Christic Institute book is an expression of that, and it is something that I should like to explore in the future, the idea of using comics to address political and social issues.

WE GO BACK A LONG WAY, THE OLD MAN AND I
OH, NO!
CALL HIM MONSTER, CALL HIM EVERYTHING ONCE HE HAD A DIFFERENT NAME, ONCE HE WAS AN ANARCHIST. HE ISN'T A KID ANYMORE. HE ISN'T EVEN A MAN...
Art: By Steve Dillon/Copyright 1982 Alan Moore/Steve Dillon/Quality Communications

Miracleman's end may have been in sight as early as 1982, but more recent events forced Moore to slightly alter what he and Steve Dillon had foreseen in *Warrior* #4.

CS: In COMICS SCENE QUARTERLY #3, Sam Hamm admitted that he borrowed a couple of lines from *The Killing Joke* for his *Batman* script.

MOORE: Well, that's nice. Sam is also going to be doing the *Watchmen* script, and I met him when he came up to Northampton. He's a lovely chap, and from reading his *Batman* script, a very good writer. Yeah, there are bits in there where he used a couple of lines from *Dark Knight*. I didn't notice any from *The Killing Joke* but there may well be a couple in there, but I think that's more in the tradition of trying to carry over the spirit of the contemporary Batman so that it avoids being just another camp costumed hero affair. I'm pleased. If Sam has managed to find something in my work or Frank Miller's that he can use, then it will be nice to see it in the film.

CS: And I imagine you're looking forward to his *Watchmen* script.

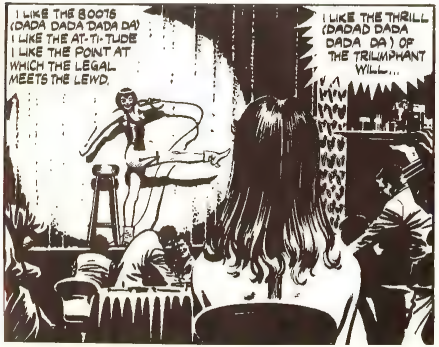
MOORE: Yeah, it will be nice to see it. Since having Sam over for dinner, I haven't really been in touch with the movie at all. I don't know how it's coming along, whether it's still going, whether it's going to be made or not. If it does get made, I shall be interested to see what Sam has done with it. I'm fairly sure that Sam himself would tell you that it's not going to be like the comic. To me, the comic is a complete work. If the script coincides with it, that's all well and good. As far as I'm concerned, what Sam is doing is a wholly new piece of work. It's based upon and probably shares some common ground with *Watchmen*, but I would rather it be judged as a thing in itself. It wouldn't be fair to Sam to compare it to the book and say, "Oh, they didn't do this, that and the other." I also don't think the success or failure of *Watchmen* as a film means very much to *Watchmen* as a work of comic art. They share the same name and probably have some characters in common, but they are two different projects.

You'll have to forgive me if I sound a bit lukewarm on these things, but I don't really have any sort of ambitions in the cinema or any real strong thoughts about it. I mean, somebody phoned me up this afternoon, asking me if I was interested in writing the third *RoboCop* movie, but I'm not. I've managed to extricate myself from writing characters with strange names and costumes in comic books, I don't really want to write myself into doing the same thing in movies. So, I don't really tend to take an awful lot of notice of what happens in the film world.

CS: That almost answers the next question. What stage is *Fashion Beast* in?

MOORE: I wrote the script, but I don't know *what* has happened to it. I did that as an experiment to see whether I could write a movie script. It turns out I can. I don't know whether it's a good one or not. Apparently, Malcolm McLaren's office was pleased with it, but then, I'm sure it has gone through several rewrites since then. Once I got paid for it, I've had no more to do with the picture.

This will sound terrible, but I'm not that interested. It was fun working with Malcolm McLaren. He's a wonderful, in-


I LIKE THE BOOTS (DADA DADA DADA DA) I LIKE THE AT-TI-TUDE I LIKE THE POINT AT WHICH THE LEGAL MEETS THE LEWD.
I LIKE THE THRILL (DADAD DADA DADA DA) OF THE TRIUMPHANT WILL...
Art: David Lloyd

V for Vendetta Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1988 DC Comics Inc.

Evey takes in the state of the arts in 1998, a show that Moore fears he might be experiencing much sooner.

Swamp Thing Art: Steve Bissette & John Totleben/Trademark & Copyright 1988 DC Comics Inc.

teresting person with a very effervescent mind full of incredible ideas, but I suppose that I was only doing it as an experiment. Writing a screenplay is a lot of fun but not an experience that I'm eager to repeat. I understand that any screenplay I write will be subject to just as much revision as people feel it needs, which in some cases can extend up to 40 studio executives having their input on it and asking for changes. There's no guarantee that what appears on the screen will have any resemblance to what I wrote. I've been spoiled by comics. Everything that I do, every full stop [i.e. punctuation, a period] that I put in a comics script, makes it to the finished page, and that is an amount of control which is very precious to me. Consequently, that's not something I'm prepared to give up for any sort of financial inducements or for the lure of Hollywood. So, I've not really had any contact with the film since then.

Once More Into the Swamp . . .

All their hard work may have brought *Swamp Thing* to full bloom, but news that a cinematic sequel is based on their cultivation of the character finds Alan Moore's and Steve Bissette's excitement for the project somewhat wilted.

"It'll be nice if they did a good *Swamp Thing* picture based upon our work," admits Moore, "even though I suppose it would be a bit annoying to think of having provided people with these concepts and not see any remuneration from it. Because of the way DC is set up, none of the concepts that I introduced into *Swamp Thing* are actually owned by *me*. Then again, it's a feeling I've got quite used to in the past 10 years of working for comics."

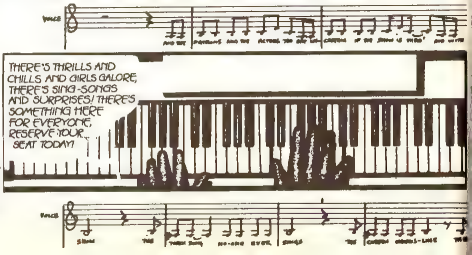
Not only does DC own everything that appears in the pages of *Swamp Thing*, but under "the contract that DC had signed with [film producers] Michael Uslan and Benjamin Melniker back in 1979, the movie people own the character lock, stock and barrel," explains Bissette. "They [DC] also sold them the rights to use material from the comic past, present and future, meaning that if this film does well and the pro-

What sort of filmic fruit will the seed that Moore, Bissette and Totleben planted bear? Even the Swamp Thing's gardeners will have to stand on line to see how this harvest turns out.

As far as I know, *Fashion Beast* is still in the eternal limbo of films that might be made one day.

CS: One last question: How do you feel about mainstream audiences getting interested in comics?

MOORE: I feel great about it. I don't know what the situation is in America, but over here, the file of customers through the comic shops has tripled over the last 18 months, almost directly as a result of the extraordinary wide coverage that comics have recently been receiving in the mainstream press, in the style


THERE'S THRILLS AND CHILLS AND GIRLS GALORE, THERE'S SING-SONGS AND SURPRISES! THERE'S SOMETHING HERE FOR EVERYONE, RESERVE YOUR SEAT TODAY!

Art: David Lloyd

Steve Bissette and John Totleben's designs shamble across the screen as Dick Durock returns as the new (and possibly improved) Swamp Thing.

began work on the character.

"Also, I've had parts of the screenplay read to me, and [Swamp Thing editor] Karen Berger is sending me a copy," the artist notes. "There's a car chase with Swamp Thing driving a car, and Abigail says,'My mother always said vegetables were good for me.' It doesn't sound like they've emulated Alan's approach at all."

Despite their concerns, both Bissette and Moore are nevertheless awaiting the *Return of Swamp Thing* with some curiosity.

"I hope it's a fun movie," says Steve Bissette, who intends to continue branching out into writing with occasional *Swamp Thing* stories. "I did read in the back of COMICS SCENE #4 that they were patterning it after John Totleben's and my design, and I'm curious to see what they do with it. I'm sort of apprehensive about it, but if it's in the theaters, I'll be the first in line to see it."

"Who knows? It might not be a bad movie. I shall give it a watch when it comes out," Alan Moore confesses. "But I'm not holding out a great deal of hopes for it. I just hope they cover the zippers in this one."

—Daniel Dickholtz

Accompanied by Abigail (Heather Locklear), the arisen-from-the-grave Arcane (Louis Jourdan) arrives to again attack the arboreal wonder.

Return of Swamp Thing Photos Courtesy Lightyear Entertainment

ducers [next] decide they want to work from one of Alan's scripts, they could do a *verbatim* adaptation from an Alan Moore script, work from John Totleben's and my design or Rick Veitch's and not have to credit us or pay us a cent. Paul Levitz said, 'It was the worst contract DC has ever made.' I'm less than happy with that, but it was a condition that existed *before* we even

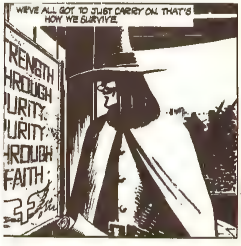
magazines, in the music papers and so on. That makes me feel slightly more hopeful about the chances of as radical a project as *The Mandelbrot Set*.

Now, this audience has been drawn into the comics shops by seeing articles in *Rolling Stone* or its British equivalents. They, I think, will be interested in a cynical revamping of the superhero genre maybe once, twice, three or four times. They'll read *Dark Knight*, *Watchmen*, *Marshal Law* and maybe a couple of others, but they'll *not* be infinitely obsessed with superheroes and fantasy in the same way that our traditional audience has been. Basically, it's a new audience with new requirements, and it's our responsibility to live up to those requirements. And that's trickier than it sounds.

Previously, having come from comic fandom myself, I've had a pretty shrewd grasp of what the average comic fan will or will not like. I suppose that to some degree my sensibilities, at least in terms of my superhero work, are those of an overgrown comic fan. You know, wouldn't it be great if Batman did this or if Superman did that? So, I had that

(continued on page 32)

V asks everyone to join in a chorus of "This Vicious Cabaret," a song of the very near future and a situation that led Moore to cry *A.A.R.G.H.!*



Art: David Lloyd

"Once you've gone through the initial depression of confronting these problems in your everyday existence," says Moore, "you must find some way to see *beyond* them."

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3. Send your entry in an envelope—or if it's brief enough, on the back of a postcard—to: Batman Contest
COMICS SCENE/STARLOG
475 Park Avenue South
NY, NY 10016.

4. All entries must be received in the magazines' editorial offices by noon Friday, October 14. Judging will take place immediately *that* afternoon. All decisions of the judges will be final.

5. Employees (including freelancers) of STARLOG/COMICS SCENE, O'Quinn Studios, Warner Bros., British Airways or DC Comics, and their families, are *not* eligible to enter.

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TV's TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

Come along as Kevin Eastman & Peter Laird's heroes in a half-shell kick, chop and leap into all-new, all-ninja animation.

By WILL MURRAY

All Turtles Graphic Novel Art: Kevin Eastman & Peter Laird

All Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Characters Trademark & Copyrighted 1986, 1987, 1988 Mirage Studios

"We really liked it!" says Mirage Studios' Peter Laird. "Ditto." seconds Kevin Eastman, with Laird, co-creator of the wildly successful Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. "We enjoyed it a lot. It's operating on two levels. There's goofy fun for the kids, but then there's more adult stuff."

The enthusiastic duo are talking about the five-part *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* animated show syndicated earlier this year. And they have good reason to be enthusiastic. Five years ago, their Mirage Studios was well named—it was all blue sky and imaginary horizons. Now, thanks to their whimsical quartet of renaissance reptiles, Eastman and Laird's dreams are as solid as a mountain of gold. They publish two direct-sales *Turtles* titles, there are trade paperback reprints, Archie Comics has released a mass-market version adapting the cartoons, a role-playing game is out, and the strong ratings of the experimental *Turtles* TV series has led syndicators Group W to order 13 more episodes for this fall. And

The Turtles have gone totally Hollywood. Certain alterations have made them more suitable for animated action.

the show is backed by a growing toy line marketed by Playmates in co-operation with Mirage Studios and producers Murakami Wolf Swenson.

However, the Turtles that audiences will see on TV won't quite be the same fun-loving reptiles who took the comic-book universe by storm back in May 1984 (see CSQ #1).

"In terms of how faithful it is to our

All Turtles Graphic Novel Art Copyright 1988 Mirage Studios. First Comics Inc.

Splinter, the Turtles' sensei, will undergo further changes. In one animated tale, he reverts back to human form.

original comic," says Laird, "it's changed quite a bit. But the characters of the Turtles and Splinter have been hewed to very closely. That's probably what we're happiest about."

"It *is* very different," Eastman adds. "Peter and I have always written our own comic, first to please ourselves, and hopefully to please the people reading them. It's the first time we've actually approved things geared to a specific audience. They're looking for a younger audience than we are, probably ages five and up. That's something that we always take into account in the steps of approval on the storyboards and the stories. We have to soften up and rearrange our thinking."

"If Kevin and I were to have our druthers," Laird explains, "the TV series would look *very* different. We would probably have kept it much closer to the look of the original book and the characters, but one concern of Playmates, the toy company, that was fronting the money for the five episodes, was that the Turtles all looked too much alike. They wanted kids to be able to pick out one Turtle from another. That's why you see the different-colored headbands, the slightly different flesh and shell colors for the Turtles, and the initialed belt buckles. Those were all changes made for identification."

The problem of having created four too-similar characters is one that has plagued the duo since they first launched the Turtles. For a time, they also considered altering the looks of Leonardo, Donatello, Michaelangelo and Raphael for the benefit of their comics audience.

"We tried some variations in costumes, but we like them too much just the way they are," Eastman relates. "We worked very hard on their personalities by doing one-issue micro-series showcasing specific Turtles to help develop more of a personality for them, so people can recognize them without their weapons. Again, we approve everything that the animation company does, and we *did* approve the fact that it would be easier to recognize them with the distinct changes that they made. Pete and I even had afterthoughts. Can you imagine if we had thought about four *different* types of turtles way back when? Like a snapping turtle and a painted turtle? It might have given them a *real* different look."

April survived her animated debut with her jumpsuit intact, but plans call for her to take a shine to catnip.

With the potential *Turtles* TV audience reaching into the millions, Eastman and Laird are aware of the temptation to change their book to conform with that alternative reality, much the way DC Comics once modified *Batman* and *Wonder Woman* in the wake of their popular TV shows.

"The licensing or animation is in *no* way affecting what we will do, would have done, or might do in our own book," Eastman promises. "Pete and I will not sign a contract with anybody who doesn't give us *full* approval rights of anything done. Having that as a springboard, so to speak, we can have our say. If they try to do anything really funky or stupid, we can try to stop it. There won't be anything that we would be embarrassed about."

"We have our own Turtles book and we can still do whatever we want, using our own vision and telling our own stories," Laird adds firmly.

Happily, they've experienced only a few problems watchdogging the TV Turtles.

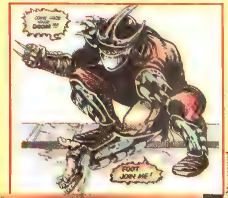
"It was mostly in the first five episodes," Eastman recalls. "We flew out to California to meet with [producer] Fred Wolf and the other guys. We looked at the scripts and storyboards. They had done a pretty good job, but there were a couple of things that had to be changed because they just hadn't quite got the books' feel. For example, there's a character that they took from our books, Baxter Stockman, an absent-minded professor type. At the end of the five-part series, they wanted him to become pals with the Turtles and they were all going to live in this big scientific complex called the Technodrome—which we nixed right away because it made *no* sense. The Turtles already have their own absent-minded professor, Donatello. It just didn't make sense for them to be living in this hi-tech headquarters, either. The Turtles are much funkier than that. That was one thing where we said, 'No, you can't do that. Do something else.' And we made some suggestions.

"Another idea they had for the end was that the Shredder and Krang, this brain-like alien, would all be combined into one body, which we also nixed because that takes away from the uniqueness of the Shredder and his character. With the new scripts, there really hasn't been anything to complain about. They really seem to have the feel for it now. With the five-part series, I think they were finding their footing."

Producer Fred Wolf, who previously worked as supervisory producer for Disney's *Duck Tales* (CSQ #2), agrees.

"We've departed quite a bit from the comic books that Peter and Kevin do," Wolf admits. "When it was presented as a potential film, we were sold immediately on the comic's bizarreness, and I realized that this had all the makings of something unique to television, provided we could make the translation over to what's commonly called action-adventure shows. What we tried to glean out of the strip, although the comic books themselves don't have an abundance of it, was to pre-

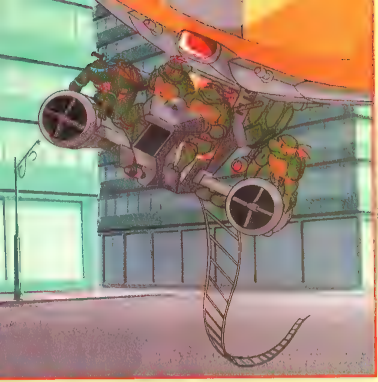
Expect to see an animated Shredder seeking vengeance on the Turtles in every episode.



The Turtles don't look too happy about their creators' brewing second thoughts. Should there have been four different types of turtles in the beginning?

Turtles Graphic Novel Colors: Kevin Eastman, Ken Fedunkiewicz & Jackie Cohen

All Turtles TV Animation Art: Copyright 1987 Playmates Toys, Inc. All rights reserved



All Animation Art: Courtesy Murakami Wolf Swenson

Don't expect the TV Turtles' success to go to their creators' heads. "The licensing or animation is in no way affecting what we will do, would have done, or might do in our own book," promises Kevin Eastman.

sent a little more tongue-in-cheek attitude in the cartoons, a little more sophomoric humor, if you will. It's not exactly a direct spoof on other shows such as *Thundercats* and *Silverhawks*, but certainly our characters are very much aware of the preposterous situation that they're in. We even reach out and do a little touch that has been done many times before, that let-the-folks-know-we're-on-a-set thing. We don't go as far as *Moonlighting* and say, 'Thank God the writers wrote this in,' but we do have the occasional look to the camera and a character will say, 'Bet you thought I could never say that.' "

Although the original animation team is still on board, the addition of new writers like Christy (*Sisterhood of Steel*) Marx, means that *Turtles* fans can expect new characters and a slightly different approach to the main cast.

"I think we have more personality development on the four of them," Wolf points out. "We're trying to get a little more human interest, if you will, in their interaction with each other. For example, their mentor is Splinter, who was once a guy but became a mutant rat. They discover that there are some remnants of this mutagen and they whip it up. Splinter takes it and he returns to his human form. He experiences some things where the bottom line is that he *prefers* to be a rat. He's in a Manhattan-like city and he's mugged, he's pick-pocketed, he's cheated and defrauded. Anyway, the mutagen didn't take and so he resigns himself to being what he is—but it isn't that bad."

"In one episode, they're introducing a mutant fly creature," Laird adds, "which may be one of the toys. Actually, it's the Baxter Stockman character transformed into this creature. It's based upon one of the designs that we did. In another one, April becomes a cat woman, which is a pretty funny episode."

"They might be using an alligator character called Leatherhead," Eastman offers.

"Bebop and Rocksteady are back," continues Laird. "They're all going to be toys from Playmates. Bebop and Rocksteady were designed before the first five episodes were made and then they were incorporated into those episodes. The toys are all being designed together. Now for the second year, they're coming out with a toy version of Krang. So, it all interconnects."

One pitfall everyone is concerned about avoiding is allowing the toy elements to overshadow the TV series.

Unwittingly, the Ninja's absent-minded professor, Donatello, ended another comic character's chances of becoming a permanent part of the animated cast.

"The show is *not* a living commercial for these toys," Wolf promises. "The story and the show *contents have* to work. If we can use something that has a toy potential or indeed is a toy and it becomes a comfortable thing, we will. But you've seen shows in the past where you see one item after another, and there are five words of dialogue. It almost becomes an animated commercial. That's what we definitely stayed away from."

It's Fred Wolf's task to coordinate the toy company's concerns with the show's dramatic needs, and to tie those in with local TV standards, particularly concerning violence. It's a responsibility he takes seriously.

"Playmates just wants to make sure that young boys are going to be interested in the series and that there'll be enough action in it," Wolf explains. "We go to great lengths to keep the action in without violence, and that's a good trick to do. We don't have people bashing each other. And even though they are ninjas by training, and these are lethal weapons they're using, we never have them actually striking a person, if we can help it. Maybe one bop got squeezed in during the first five shows, but what they do is they'll hit some inanimate object that will cause an effect, a chandelier may drop and stop the bad guys. We stop them in any other way except actually hitting them."

Because *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* is syndicated, they are allowed to keep their swords and other martial arts weapons—which would be forbidden on a network program. Even then, some ac-

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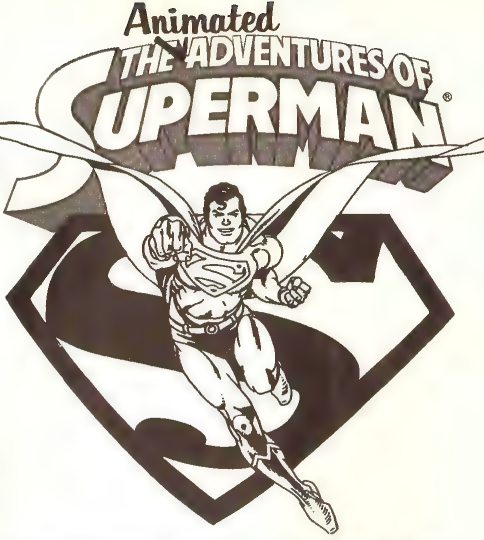


With a boost from Marv Wolfman, the Man of Steel is making the leap to animation in a single bound.

By BILL WARREN

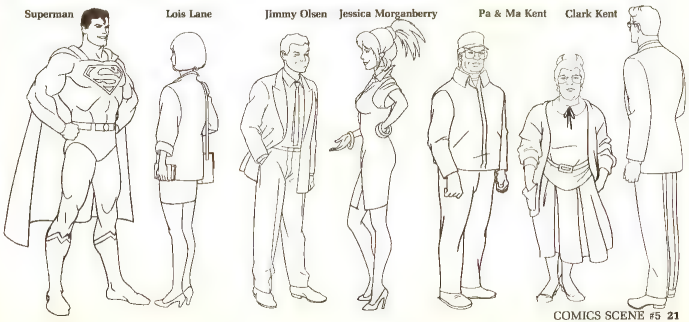
"We're trying," Marv Wolfman says with conviction, "to do as straight a Superman as we possibly can."

He's talking about the new CBS Saturday-morning cartoon series, and if anyone can do what he wants, despite the usual restrictions of TV animation, it's likely to be Marv Wolfman. He has been writing comic books for what seems like centuries—certainly to Wolfman it seems that long—and in the last few years, he has been involved in writing TV cartoons as well. Though he's best known for his work on Marvel's *Tomb of Dracula* and DC's *New Teen Titans*, Wolfman was a regular writer on the restructured Man of Steel of the last few years. Currently, he's the story editor of the new Ruby-Spears *Superman* series, produced and art-directed by John Dorman.

Wolfman shows his visitor to the enameled patio furniture beside his odd, rock-rimmed swimming pool, the one with the ivy-bedecked waterfall, and talks about the Man of Steel.

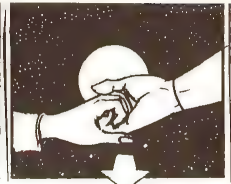
"Superman is one of the four best-known characters in the entire world, along with Sherlock Holmes, Robin Hood and Mickey Mouse. The fact that he hasn't had a cartoon series of his own for 20 years is very strange. He's the primal superhero character. He's 20th-century mythology."

Wolfman's face is normally not very expressive, but his brow furrows a little as he explains his view of the oldest superhero. "Characterization for Superman has always been limited. He *is* truth, justice and the American way, and that's his personality. He's very straightforward. He's very friendly. He's someone who would say 'Hi' instead of 'Hello.' He doesn't say an awful lot, unless it's to be expository or to be helpful. Certainly, in action, he never says anything. What you can do in the TV show is physically move him, show him doing large superheroic deeds that are interesting in animation."



Superman Animation Art: Courtesy of & Copyright 1988 Ruby-Spears Enterprises

All Superboy, Superman, & Associated Characters: Trademark & Copyright 1988 DC Comics Inc.



Wolfman hauls a floating chair, in which he admits he spent much of his free time upon arriving in Lotus Land, out of the pool. Of the series, he reveals that "everyone at CBS was very hot for it. We're spending a great deal of time. Most animated TV shows on Saturday morning are done in 'threes,' one drawing for every three frames. We're doing it in twos, which is more expensive and also gives you better animation, we hope. What I like is that it's a *very* imaginative series. Some of the stories work better than others, but that's the problem you have in Saturday morning animation anyway. It's not as hard-hitting as, say, syndicated animation is, but this is still Superman.

"The designs are by Gil Kane, whom I worked with on Superman [in the pages of *Action*] for about two years, and we had a very successful run on the book. Also, when the storyboards are done, John Dorman has Gil come in and make all the corrections and heighten-up the action sequences, so the action stuff is authentic, dynamic and looks like Gil Kane. Because of his years in comic books, Gil has an inside-out knowledge of Superman, as well as a sense of lyrical romanticism to his work that's just lovely. Of course, storyboards are not taken literally, they're merely the designs, but Gil's are absolutely *brilliant*. He was the choice of the art director and producer John Dorman. Gil has been working at Ruby-Spears for a number of years, and if I had a choice, I would have worked with Gil, too."

Each show will feature two stories. The opener is an action-oriented 18-minute tale, featuring Superman battling some crisis, while the four-minute backup episode, generally written by Cherie Wilkerson, "follows Superman from the point he's adopted by the Kents," Wolfman reveals. "The first four-minute episode is the adoption of little baby Clark, through to his first appearance as Superman. Each episode is actually in chronological order because he keeps getting older episode by episode as he's learning to use his power."

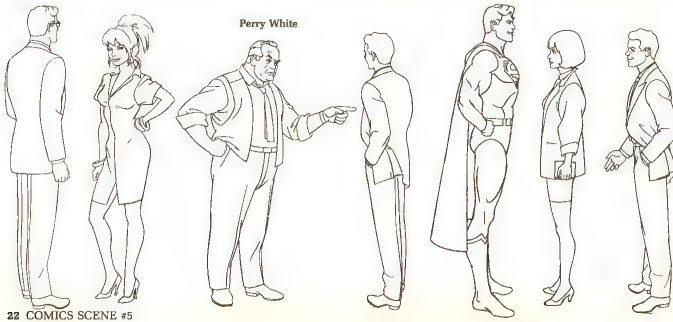
Despite his fame, or perhaps because of it, Wolfman is a shy man, though confident about his talents and honest about his influences. When it's pointed out that what he has described sounds rather like the classic Fleischer Studios Superman cartoons of the early 1940s, Wolfman quickly agrees, "because that's what I'm influenced by. We can't do things that elaborately, but there are Fleischer elements that we try to include: that sense of jeopardy, that sense of vulnerability. What we're centering on is more sense of characterization, and many story elements that they couldn't get into eight minutes."

However, Wolfman is mildly irked when a question is raised as to whether the TV cartoon Superman will be the "John Byrne Superman."

"You mean the 1980s Superman? Don't phrase it like that because there is *no* John Byrne Superman anymore. He's off the book [see page 26]. It's now a George Perez Superman or a Jerry Ordway Superman or something else. It's combinations of various Supermans. We have a closer-to-Chris-Reeve version, where he has a soft sense of humor. Clark Kent is very much the old style Clark Kent, where he was klutzy and you could have fun with him."

As in the comics, the principal villain will be Lex Luthor, "the *current* Lex Luthor, the one that I created for the new version of the book. Since he talks like Gene Hackman, which is a hell of a lot of fun to write, it's not *quite* the modern Luthor, but he is the multi-zillionaire industrialist instead of the secret criminal madman."

As were many Superman fans, Wolfman was not pleased when Clark was de-nerded and the romantic ties between Superman and Lois Lane vanished. So, he says with a sly smile, "we've *reinstated* the romantic triangle between them, where Lois likes Superman very



Familiar sights from the films (as shown in these storyboards) won't be the only thing accompanying Superman. John Williams' rousing score will also mark his entrance into animation.

much, Superman sort of ignores Lois, Clark says nice things to Lois but he's ignored. To have Clark know he's Superman but have to pretend he's a klutz, while Lois likes Superman, is the basic thing that makes Superman work."

Jimmy Olsen is going to be the original 19-year-old cub reporter/photographer, but without a bowtie. Wolfman tried to include that time-honored element, "but they couldn't make it work in animation correctly. But he is the 'Jeepers, Mr. Kent' Jimmy Olsen. I have to be honest, I love writing that. Perry White is the old hard-hitting editor, 'Great Caesar's ghost! Don't call me Chief' person."

None of the episodes will be based on any published comic-book stories. Of the other DC heroes, only Wonder Woman is scheduled to appear, and so far, only Luthor, the Prankster and the Phantom Zone villains have been added to the show. "Superman, unlike Batman, doesn't have a very good rogues' gallery. We've tried to do a Mr. Mxyzptlk story, and a Bizarro story, but couldn't make them work." Wolfman also tried to use his own robotic Brainiac, but as the character was in a state of flux at DC, he had to change the villain's name to "Cybron." Instead of being from space, Cybron's from the future, but he's otherwise similar to the revamped Brainiac of several years ago.

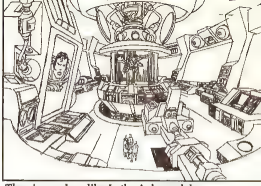
As story editor, Wolfman has written the show's "bible," detailing the characters and desired story elements, as well as the pilot, and will probably do the Wonder Woman episode. Though he ordinarily works from his home office, for *Superman*, Wolfman actually has to go to his austere office at Ruby-Spears at very early hours "for a freelancer," he laughingly complains. "Essentially, what I do is contact writers, try to get stories from them and work with them on some of the concepts."

First, the writer's premise is worked on by Wolfman, to save much-needed time, then passes through Ruby-Spears, and back to Wolfman, who does quickly-needed rewrites. It then goes on through CBS and back to Wolfman. The original writer does a beat outline, which makes the same trip (more Wolfman rewrites), and finally the script does the same (yet more Wolfman rewrites).

Wolfman's discipline and thoroughness are well-known in the comic business, and they're needed here, too. "After the script is accepted, I go over the storyboards. If there's something that doesn't accurately tell the story, John Dorman and I make changes in the storyboards. Then, after the storyboards are timed, I may have to cut more time out of it—no script ever comes short, it' *always* comes long—and figure out how to link scenes, bridge scenes, so that they make sense. If you cut a major segment out of a story, you have to re-establish any facts that were told in that segment. So, you have to do that very cleverly."

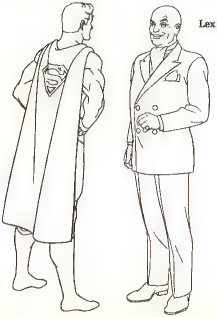
There are some drawbacks. "There's that ego at stake, even though I'm not writing the stories. Sometimes, it's very difficult to accept the rejection of a story you like, and it's equally hard when a story you're only mildly in favor of does go. Another difficult part is telling people you don't like their material or having to change stuff that you think was good because somebody at the network or the studio here wants changes. I don't believe in changes just for the sake of change, but unfortunately that happens often." Wolfman sighs. "It's much more work than I ever expected.

"We're trying to do *Superman* without compromise. You either like or dislike the stories, but the characters all act in character. There has been a decision on everybody's part, from CBS to Ruby-Spears to me to [publisher] Jenette Kahn at DC, to [DC Executive VP] Paul Levitz,

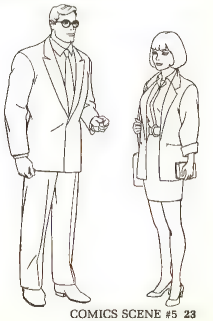


There's no place like Luthor's home lab.

Superman and friends face a fiery opponent from Chinese folklore in "By the Skin of the Dragon's Teeth."



Lex Luthor



who goes over every script, [DC VP-Creative Director] Joe Orlando, who goes over the art, to be as honest with the character as you can be."

OK, so the approach sounds right; what about the stories? Wolfman's pilot episode, "Destroy the Defendroids," features Luthor creating "a robotic police force called the Defendroids which essentially force Superman to quit, but of course it's all a nefarious scheme.

"'Fugitive from Space' is the second episode, by Martin Pasko," Wolfman explains. "Scientists uncover an alien spaceship carrying an alien cop and a prisoner. We don't know who is who. And the villain of the piece, the prisoner, is hatching eggs, if you want to call them eggs, something that's more of that person's species, to take over our planet.

"The third episode, though these may not be shown in this order, is called 'By the Skin of the Dragon's Teeth.' It's another Luthor episode where they go to China and unleash a character from Chinese mythology, a dragon lord. Luthor does this accidentally while trying to get a treasure of his own. That's by Karen Willson and Chris Weber.

"The fourth episode, 'Cybron Strikes,' is by Buzz Dixon. Cybron's a half-man half-machine from the future, who's coming to computerize the planet and turn it into a giant weapon. The next one is 'The Big Scoop,' by Michael Reaves, a very funny story in which Luthor steals a machine that can see into the future, and what he accidentally sees is Clark Kent turning into Superman.

"'The Hunter,' again by Willson and Weber, is the one with the Phantom Zone villains. They biogenetically create a hunter, which is primarily a shape shifter, whose sole mission is to destroy Superman, and it's a hunt throughout all of Metropolis, step by step, trying to wipe him out.

"Then comes 'Triple-Play,' by Larry DiTillio, the Prankster story, where he steals the World Series. After that is 'Bonechill," also by DiTillio, a horror story about the owner of an occult bookshop who manages to get the powers to create monsters on Earth: the Frankenstein Monster, Dracula, a werewolf and others.

"We don't have the next few set, but they include my Wonder Woman story, and the show's final episode for this season, 'The Last Time I Saw Earth.'

(continued on page 32)

. . . And the Adventures of Superboy

The adventures of the young Superman begin in October. That's when *Superboy*, a new syndicated TV series, makes its debut on stations across the country (representing at least 92% of the USA). John Haymes Newton, a 22-year-old actor, has the dual role of Superboy and his alter-ego Clark Kent with 20-year-old actress Stacy Haiduk as young Lana Lang. The two attend Shuster University (reportedly located in Siegelville).

Newton won't just be playing a younger version of Christopher Reeve (CSQ #1). "That's why the role is so incredible," says Newton, "because I'm not about a superhero. I'm a *real* kid going to college, majoring in journalism and the story's about that. The story's about a kid growing up who just happens to have some superpowers. And as the series unfolds, it's neat how I learn to deal with all the various problems that crop up, establishing things for the adventures to come when I'm older. In playing the facade between the two characters, Superboy and Clark Kent, I'm playing Clark Kent more real."

First announced in late February, *Superboy* was being sold to stations throughout the spring, though some core production personnel for the series weren't recruited until May. Shooting started August 15 to meet the October 4 week series premiere.

Masterminds behind the series are Alexander and Ilya Salkind, who previously produced *Supergirl* and *Superman I, II* and *III* before essentially "selling" the Superman series to Cannon Films (which made *Superman IV* and has an option to make *V*. According to Ilya Salkind, Cannon must continue to pick up their on-going option on Superman; Cannon does *not* own the series). The Salkinds retained rights to Supergirl as well as to Superboy and his share of DC Comics' Superman mythos created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster and expanded upon by many others. This TV series, distributed by Viacom Enterprises, can be based only on that specific Superboy portion of the mythos.

"This is really our *first* television venture," announces Ilya Salkind. "It gives us a fantastic opportunity to explore areas of young Clark Kent which haven't really been touched on in the films. And we feel very good about the technical and creative talents involved."

The Salkinds have recruited Robert Simmonds, who worked on the previous Superman films and served as associate producer of *Superman III*, to actually line produce the series. Installed as story editor is Fred Freiberger, a figure of some controversy in SF-TV due to his tenure as producer of the third season of *Star Trek*. Freiberger has also worked on *Space: 1999*, *The Wild, Wild West*, *Beyond Westworld* and other genre shows. Casting was handled by veteran casting maven Lynn Stalmaster, who, a decade ago, named Christopher Reeve as the Man of Steel.

"I didn't get an audition for this series," Newton reveals. "I went down to Wilmington, North Carolina—which I'm originally from—to see if I could get some work in films [apparently at nearby De Laurentiis Studios]. I read for Lynn Stalmaster. He called Florida and then he asked me, 'Would you be interested in flying down to Orlando for a screen test for a series?' I was delighted. And I moved to Orlando two weeks later."

Curiously, Jackie Cooper—the actor who played Perry White in the Salkinds' Superman films who's also an accomplished TV director of *M*A*S*H* and other series—will direct at least three *Superboy* episodes. Colin Chilvers, who executed FX on *Superman*, will also helm several segments.

Production is centered at the brand new Disney-MGM Studios facility at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida with all interiors shot at soundstages there. Disney World amusement areas and properties can be used for exteriors with other location lensing, as needed, to take place around the Orlando area. Incidentally, *Superboy* is the *first* TV series as well as the first non-Disney project of any kind to be filmed at Disney-MGM.

The first season will comprise 26 half-hour episodes with producer Salkind projecting a four-season, 104-episode run. Six-and-a-half minutes of commercial time is being carved from each segment. And despite the 22-week writers' strike, *Superboy* will fly on time. The producers

Photos: Courtesy Schechter/Cone/McCallister

Only the Producer (Ilya Salkind, center) could rescue Superboy (John Haymes Newton) and Lana Lang (Stacy Haiduk) from comics limbo.

signed an interim agreement with the Writers Guild, which allowed scripting of the series *during* the strike.

DC has been intimately involved in the writing process with *Superman* editor Mike Carlin and his former co-editor Andy Helfer conferring frequently with Freiberger. The duo have also meticulously pored over scripts.

Jenette Kahn, DC publisher, explains: "We have approval rights to *everything*, the casting of Superboy/Clark Kent, approval of the synopses, the scripts and the revised scripts. We even have the right to be on the set as the show is being shot to oversee the revisions being made during the shooting.

"The idea of setting *Superboy* in college was an interesting one because those were fairly unexplored years in Superboy's life. We know about his Smallville years, we know about his years in Metropolis. We know very little about what happened in college."

Fans aren't likely to learn more in the comic books. The Superboy character was discarded in the post-*Crisis* overhaul of the supermythos led by editors Carlin and Helfer (and implemented by John Byrne, Marv Wolfman and Jerry Ordway). "We're trying to be consistent within our Superman Universe," notes Kahn, "so we have *no* plans to bring Superboy back as a comic. He has basically been eradicated from the comics and there's no thought of bringing the title back right now."

But there will be familiar faces (and names) from the comics on hand. Kent's frequent antagonist will be a slightly older (24 or 25) Lex Luthor, while Kent's roommate is another journalism major, T.J. White, son of Metropolis' *Daily Planet* Editor Perry White (who could cameo, especially with Jackie Cooper around as director). Salkind expects two to three shows to utilize a Smallville setting, although who would play Ma & Pa Kent is undecided.

"There's a conscious decision of avoiding putting too many recognizable film elements into the series," Salkind says, "because it could unbalance the show's personality. So, there's a danger in using Phyllis Thaxter or Glen Ford [who played the roles in *Superman*]." Similarly, Salkind dismisses as conjecture the idea that filmdom's first Superman, Kirk Alyn, might portray Pa Kent. "There was only some discussion about that," the producer says.

Lana Lang, seen briefly in the first Superman film and played later by Annette O'Toole in *Superman III*, has an integral part in the series. For actress Stacy Haiduk, this is a "great opportunity. Lana is almost exactly like me—a little feisty, a little selfish on the side," Haiduk says. "But I see her more as an outgoing person. When she goes after something, she doesn't let anything stand in her way.

"They're still writing scripts, but I do know that Lana has fallen in love with Superboy but she's 'just friends' with Clark Kent, so we'll see how that one comes out. I don't want Clark! I want Superboy! Come on now, which one would you pick?"

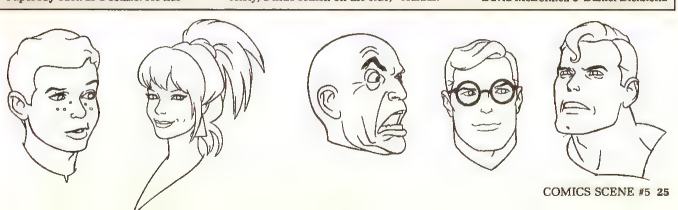
Will Superboy succeed where the Salkinds' last spin-off from the mythos, *Supergirl*, failed?

"It's a very different thing," replies Ilya Salkind. "I guess Supergirl was perhaps too campy. There's another reason: Supergirl was a superheroine. And very few superheroines have had success—except *Wonder Woman* on television. *Sheena, Queen of the Jungle* and others didn't work. Why? I can't answer that. I'm not a sociologist. Superboy is 19, Supergirl was a 21-year-old superheroine. It's a different kind of world."

Nevertheless, the Salkinds still retain ownership of film/TV rights to the Maid of Steel. "We still have it," the producer concurs. "Obviously, we're keeping the two legends separate, but they could meet in the future. Who knows?"

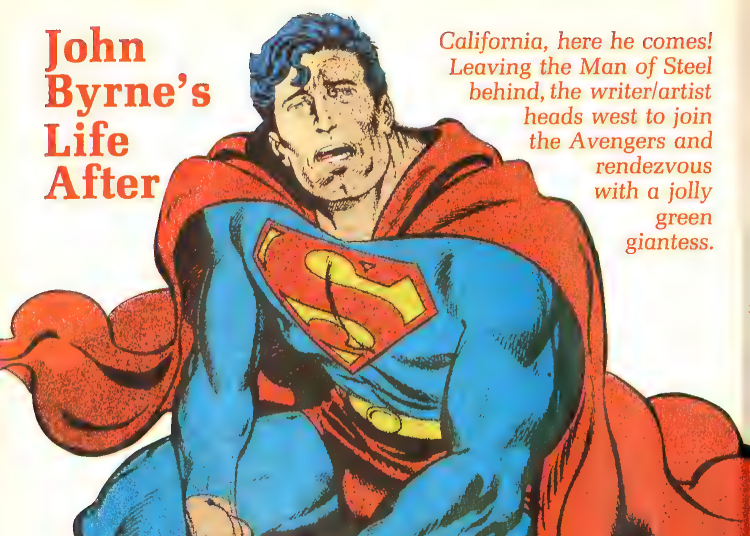
Salkind pauses. "In the meantime, we're tremendously excited about the prospects of *Superboy*."

—David McDonnell & Daniel Dickholtz



John Byrne's Life After

California, here he comes! Leaving the Man of Steel behind, the writer/artist heads west to join the Avengers and rendezvous with a jolly green giantess.



Art: John Byrne

By LISA BALLNER-BEAR

January 1987: John Byrne and the rest of DC Comics are feverishly preparing for *Superman*'s Golden Anniversary year. Since Byrne's debut issue the previous July, sales have doubled. Although there are some complaints from readers ("You're turning Superman into a yuppie!" or "How could you get rid of Krypto?"), feedback has been strongly positive. Byrne is flirting with storylines about Iranscam and Pearlygate. Readers are debating whether Clark Kent and Lois Lane will bed down before *Moonlighting*'s Maddie and Dave. There is talk of changing the Superman motto to "Truth, Justice and the American Dream." Byrne admits he is living his own career fantasy.

July 1988: Eighteen months later, Byrne is back at Marvel, one of his best friends is writing *Superman*, and the MacPlus word processor in his Connecticut studio is usually on.

"I've got at least 12 different stories and books in my computer, including a Sherlock Holmes, a science fiction and some horror," says Byrne. "I'm keeping busy."

A slight understatement. Known for his enthusiasm and an enviable ability to meet deadlines, Byrne is delighted to be juggling a dozen projects. Working out of his studio, he sketches while on the phone, then turns to the videoscreen to add a few paragraphs.

Among the various works in progress, *The West Coast Avengers* is currently getting the most attention. Since April, Byrne has been developing material with Marvel editor Howard Mackie. Byrne says the biggest appeal of this project was its second-string status, providing an opportunity to mold the characters and forge an overall focus for the plots.

"Tigra can be made interesting," he muses. "She's reasonably new, only about 10 years old, so she doesn't have the weight of Marvel history to entangle her. Then, there's Hawkeye. Every group needs a jerk, and this one thinks like a truck. I'll probably get him back together with Mockingbird. Dr. Pym used to be Ant-Man, which entailed getting small. The Wasp, his ex-wife, is back, so we'll see if romances are going to be re-ignited. And there's Wonder Man, who isn't sure he wants to be a superhero. He was almost dead once and didn't much like it."

All Superman Art & Characters: Trademark & Copyright 1988, 1987, 1986 DC Comics Inc.

Marvel will eliminate Mantis, the Phantom Rider and Moon Knight before Byrne can get his hands on them.

"We're trying to tie up all the storylines before John comes on," explains Howard Mackie. "Steve Englehart's last issue was #39 and John's first will be #42. We want to leave the characters as unencumbered as possible for him."

Byrne's first *West Coast Avengers* issues will reveal that The Vision is *not* the original Human Torch, as long believed, but the writer/artist will bring back the flaming android.

"The Vision was once insane, then became sane and happy. He was kidnapped by KGB/CIA types who erased his memories, so a whole new character emerged. Now his wife, the Scarlet Witch, is always hanging around, asking, 'Do you remember me?' 'No.' 'Do you know we have two children?' 'No.' "

To honor the Scarlet Witch, the title of Byrne's *West Coast Avengers* premiere story is "Better a Widow." Mackie supports Byrne's plan to develop the Scarlet Witch and the Vision into the kind of strong, powerful characters they were meant to be.

OK, X-fans. You've been warned, so don't miss this pairing of She-Hulk and Byrne.

OKAY, NOW. THIS IS YOUR SECOND CHANCE.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP
THE INCREDIBLE HULK
IF YOU DON'T BUY MY BOOK THIS TIME
I'M GONNA COME TO YOUR HOUSE AND RIP UP ALL YOUR X-MEN!

Art: John Byrne

Art: John Byrne/after John Buscema & George Klein Avengers #57

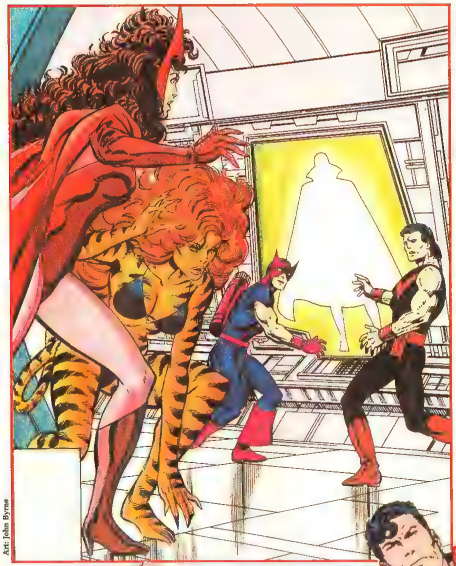
Beckoning to yesterday, a new android rises from the ashes of the "Vision Quest," and it *isn't* who you think.

Mackie, who will also become editor of *The Avengers* (written by Walt Simonson, see CSQ #3) in February 1989, believes there are "no real differences between the two groups, the difference will be in the writers' styles." Of his newest writer, Mackie says, "John has an unbelievable amount of stories he wants to tell. His biggest problem is not knowing how to turn his brain off!"

Looking ahead, there may be a storyline in July 1989, that commemorates the 50th anniversary of the original Human Torch as well as that of his alma mater. The July 1939 debut issue of *Marvel Comics* featured the Human Torch on the cover, so "on a technicality," he is actually the first Marvel superhero.

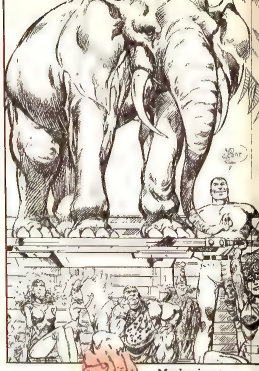
Another group of heroes who are providing hours of fun for Byrne is the Great Lakes Avengers. Led by Mr. Immortal—who can't be destroyed, but experiences the attempts ("He had his head blown off," says Byrne, "so he knows what that feels like")—they are "a bunch of characters from Detroit who think they can be Avengers just by saying so."

With that as a *modus operandi*, Byrne has deliberately *not* given the members important powers and names. Flatman can stretch himself out into a ribbon. Doorman is "a black blob" who,



Art: John Byrne

Byrne will get back to basics with *West Coast Avengers*.



Moving in on the big top, Wyatt Wingfoot (talking) and She-Hulk take center stage at a three-ring circus.

Fear Book Cover Art: Mark & Stephanie Gerber/Warner Books

"I came to realize how and why I was hired very much negated how I wanted to do *Superman*."

Leaving the four-color universes behind, Byrne entered Stephen King Country with his *Fear Book*. Further trips are planned.

Art: John Byrne

Art: John Byrne

when standing next to a wall, enables others to walk through it. Big Bertha is "3,000 lbs. of real woman: She can walk through walls, too, but she leaves a large hole." Dinah Soar, in comparison, is a svelte, pterodactyl-like woman. The group will appear briefly in *The West Coast Avengers*, then Doorman and Dinah Soar will remain while the others disappear from the scene.

Also on the drawing board is a monthly for Bruce Banner's cousin, the sensational She-Hulk.

"I'm going to do crazy stuff with *The She-Hulk*, really nutso," Byrne confesses. "She'll be talking to the camera, breaking the fourth wall, things like that. The approach will be totally different because she knows she's in a comic book. I'm gathering all the lame villains, all the yutzes of the Marvel Universe to hit on her, and they'll be backed by still other villains who are just using them to test She-Hulk."

Although Byrne wasn't involved in the short-lived *The Savage She-Hulk*, which was cancelled in 1982, he did include her in his *Fantastic Four* issues and took a great liking to the character.

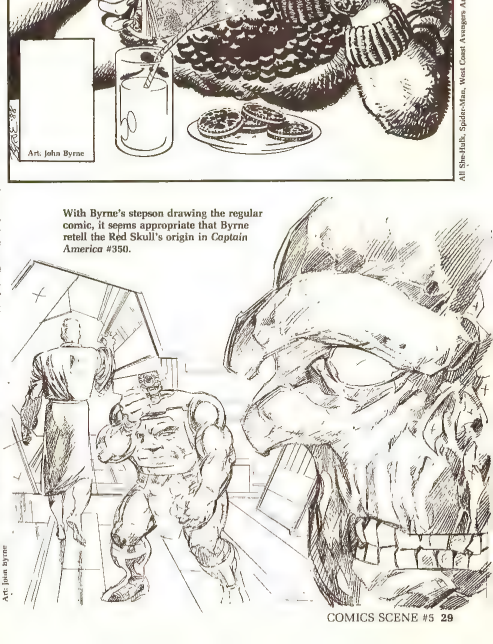
"When she had her previous series, she was Jennifer Walters from California, so people sort of wrote her off as empty-headed," says Byrne. But he figures he has solved that problem. "I've had her fixed with radiation [in his She-Hulk graphic novel], so now she can't change back and forth. She's permanently the She-Hulk."

The series will debut in early 1989, with a story titled "Second Chance." The cover art shows the She-Hulk holding the first issue of her 1980-82 series and threatening, "If you don't buy my book this time, I'm gonna come to your house and rip up all your *X-Men*!"

Art: John Byrne

Catching up on her cousin's exploits, Jennifer doesn't realize the malevolent hordes that Byrne has assembled against her.

All She-Hulk, Spider-Man, West Coast Avengers Art & Characters: Trademark & Copyright 1988 Marvel Entertainment Group



Art: John Byrne

With Byrne's stepson drawing the regular comic, it seems appropriate that Byrne retell the Red Skull's origin in *Captain America* #350.

Art: John Byrne

"Tigra can be made interesting," Byrne promises, even if it kills Hawkeye.

Bobbie Chase, Byrne's editor on *She-Hulk*, had worked with him on *Fantastic Four* and was impressed.

"I like John's style very much, so when he came back to Marvel, I grabbed him," she says. "I know many people who would love to work with him, but he's trying not to work himself to death."

At this stage, they are discussing costumes, situations, guest stars and "all the basics, like getting her an apartment. John's a never-ending pool of ideas."

One idea, planned for mid-1989, is a new romantic interest for the She-Hulk.

"I'm thinking of having her get together with Hercules, which should make for an interesting pairing," Byrne smirks. "What do they do in the evening?"

And what does Byrne do during his spare time? Besides working on the house, he collects movies on video and fantasizes what it would be like to be the rural innkeeper on *Newhart*, one of his favorite TV shows. The reality of his personal life is that he went from being a confirmed bachelor to a father overnight when he married photographer Andrea Braun in 1980. But even here, there are parts of reality that approach fantasy.

"My stepson lives in Brooklyn and is

Art: John Byrne

Expect the unexpected as Byrne takes a *Moonlighting* approach to She-Hulk's adventures, complete with a web-headed David Addison-type.

drawing *Captain America*," says Byrne, "which is weird because *I* used to live in Brooklyn and *I* used to draw *Captain America*."

Originally from North Birmingham, a rather dreary city in central England, Byrne moved to Calgary, a colder, dreary city in Western Canada, at age four. His family later settled in Chicago, and Byrne emigrated to Brooklyn in the late 1970s. Only recently, however, did he take the time off to become a U.S. citizen.

"I memorized the Constitution to prepare for it," he claims, "but they only asked me four questions: What level of government makes the laws? Where's the Capitol? Who's the President? Who's Governor of Connecticut? And guess which one I didn't know?" Byrne flubbed the name of his state's governor, but was allowed to stay in the country anyway.

Byrne's first pieces were published in fanzines, a category he characterizes as "a good place to do bad stuff while polishing your skills." His first sale, in 1971, was a two-pager for *Monster Times* which earned him $50. His next sale, four years later, ended up in a *Dracula Annual*, but led to his first steady job at Marvel.

"My father used to call me a commercial artist, and I would say, 'I'm a cartoonist, Dad,' " recalls Byrne. "When I worked on Spider-Man, he finally acknowledged what I was doing."

Byrne stayed at Marvel busily building his reputation until he was approached by DC Comics in August 1985, when they were hunting for a trouble-shooter to take on *Superman*.

"I made up my list of unreasonable demands, and they didn't consider any of them bad," he says. "They had already contrived to blow up several universes in order to clean house efficiently, so by the time I arrived there, I could concentrate on engineering the revamping of the Superman character himself."

Byrne was in heaven. Here he was, dictating the monthly adventures of his childhood idol, generating tremendous publicity, and deeply involved in the preparations for the nationwide festivities for Superman's 50th anniversary. Plans included a primetime TV special, a stainless steel statue in downtown Cleveland (home of Superman's co-creators, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster), an exhibit at the Smithsonian Institute, perhaps even a postage stamp. (In the late 1950s, there was a story about creating a stamp, but Superman vetoes the idea, fearing that envelopes cancelled in Kalamazoo might place the "oo" over the portrait's eyes, thus giving the appearance of eyeglasses and revealing his Clark Kent identity.) And then, suddenly, Byrne was gone.

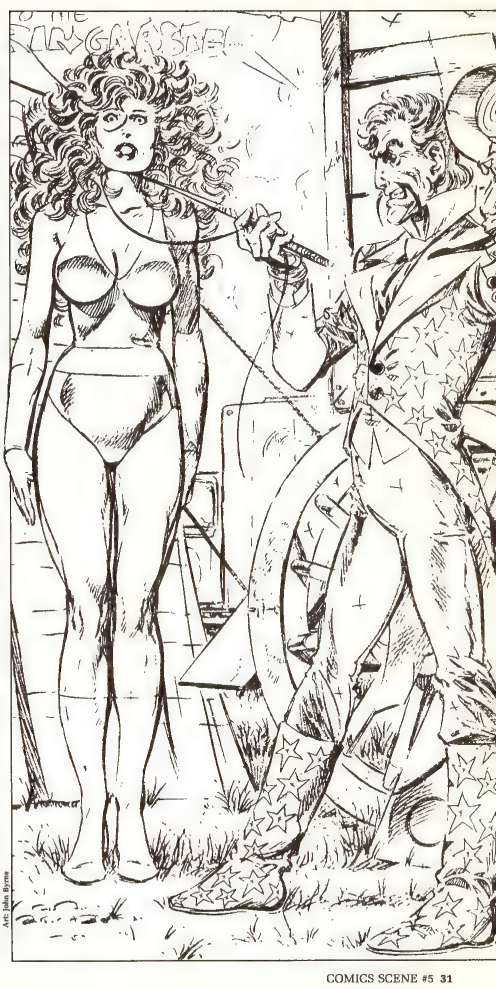
"It was a possible burn-out," he concedes of the 80-odd Superman stories he did in two years. "I came to realize that how and why I was hired very much negated how I wanted to do *Superman*, things I had thought were neat since I was eight years old."

There were other rumors about his departure. Some had to do with the DC management, others with Byrne's ego. Byrne himself has alluded to *Time*'s March 14th cover story, which regurgitated many of the "preconceived notions and legends" about Superman, as being the last straw in an on-going debacle. In any case, he continues, "I quit my day job, and immediately Marvel called up and said, 'What do you want to do?' "

Although physically gone from DC, Byrne maintains his link to *Superman* through frequent conversations with writer Roger Stern. The two were best men at each other's weddings, and share many schemes for Superman's future. When Byrne departed, he left several dangling subplots, some of which Stern has already completed according to Byrne's blueprint.

"I didn't tell all the stories I wanted to,"

The really nasty Ringmaster mesmerizes She-Hulk, taking her, like, back to her old California girl self, you know.



Art: John Byrne

Byrne now admits about his *Superman* stint (which he also discussed in CSQ #1), "The scaffolding was there, but the building wasn't finished."

Even before Marvel's call, Byrne had other projects in progress. His first novel, *Fear Book*, was published in February by Warner Books, another arm of DC's parent company. A horror story in the Stephen King mold, Byrne wrote the book because he woke up one morning with a first sentence.

"It was finished in March 1987, but it took another six months until I worked up the nerve to show it to anyone," he says, adding with a chuckle, "It's about suppression." Warner quickly requested a second book, which is taking shape in Byrne's word processor. In the meantime, he wanders into bookstores to see how sales of *Fear Book* are doing.

"I check for dust," he quips. "Actually, I'm waiting for some producer to offer me $12 million for it."

But back at Marvel, word is out that there will finally be an end to the endless *Last Galactus Story*.

"[Editor-in-Chief] Tom DeFalco has announced to the press that I'll be finishing it," agrees Byrne, "so I guess that'll happen before the turn of the century. It was a complete surprise to me!"

With 30 pages done, he thinks he needs about 20 more.

"I haven't looked at it since 1985. Frankly, it's on one of the furthest back burners, but probably it will come flooding back once I get to it."

Also, Byrne has been finishing up *The Star Brand*. "I was planning on leaving the book with #18, but now I'm staying until #19."

What's so special about #19? It will be the final issue. Effective February 1989, all four remaining New Universe titles will be cancelled, although the characters will return in special editions of graphic novels.

"We won't be doing 'The End of the New Universe,' or blow it up—which is what I would personally *like* to do," says Byrne. One idea was to have each New Universe writer have his last issue be Part One of a two-part story, but "we're not that cruel." Byrne will, among other things, reveal where the Star Brand power comes from in his last issue, however.

While the future looks simply Marvelous, Byrne has still other ideas waiting for attention, like "this science fiction thing I've had cooking for eight years."

But sensitive to his editors' priorities, John Byrne says, "I want to get way ahead on *The West Coast Avengers* and *The She-Hulk* before I do anything else. Once I have a good buffer of six months or so, then I can do other things." ■

Turtles

(continued from page 20)

commodations had to be made so that the heroes can use them more often.

"If you watch the series, you'll notice that the Turtles never use their swords on human beings," Laird points out. "They do fight the footsoldiers, but those are robots. That was one major change in the storyline. The Turtles can wail into them and kick ass as much as they want to. And it's OK because they're not people!"

Unlike the first series, the new *Turtles* episodes won't be serialized, although there will be some multi-part storylines.

"The Shredder is going to be in all of them," Laird reveals. "They're connected by the thread of the Shredder seeking vengeance on the Turtles and Splinter. Krang will be returning from the first five episodes, though not in as large a role. They're mostly independent stories. There's one run of four stories that they're doing that are all interconnected. The basic story is that an alien spacecraft crashes, and there are four gems that are spread as a result of the crash, and when you put all of them together, they create a great power. The Turtles and the Shredder are seeking these gems and they have different adventures while finding them."

When the new *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* premieres this month, everyone involved will be watching the ratings closely in the hope that Group W orders another 47 episodes to bring the entire package up to the preferred industry standard of 65 installments (allowing for daily "strip" syndication). But even if that doesn't happen, Eastman and Laird have an even bigger Turtles project in mind.

"Another avenue we're exploring is a live-action film," Laird reveals. "We're working on that right now. There's not much to tell. We're talking to some people from Hollywood. There's *serious* interest."

But can a live-action film about four talking turtles work?

"I don't see that as the major problem given the state of the effects industry," Laird says confidently.

"Especially after *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*!" Eastman notes.

With their creations being given voice and movement on TV, has it changed the way they see their Turtles?

"Only in the sense that most of the artists in the studio can mimic the voices from the cartoon really well," Eastman chuckles. "We had talked about this when we first started getting the tapes in to approve the voicetracks."

"It was funny," Laird adds. "We had really never come up with a distinct idea of what the Turtles sounded like."

"I like them!" Kevin Eastman chimes in. "Michaelangelo talks like a surfer, hey?"

"Cowabunga, dude!" Peter Laird concludes. ■

Superman

(continued from page 25)

Ralph Sanchez at CBS came up with a really nice premise. It's our only story set on an alien world; Superman has to go to another planet to save a space shuttle and several other things as well, and there's a lot of really solid action and good characterization in it.

"There were many writers I couldn't use for various other political reasons," Wolfman admits with a touch of regret. "For instance, not everybody can do a network show. There are people that the network likes to work with and people that the network doesn't want, doesn't know. Those people you try to bring in slowly, but you can't bring in on one of 13 episodes right off the top.

"There were many stories that I would have liked to have seen done that *haven't* been done. I would like it to be far more mature in some levels. I would like the show to be picked up a year ahead of time so that we would have 15 or 20 weeks for animation and not the standard eight to 10 weeks." Overall, while it's obvious that the show is a chore, Wolfman is investing much of himself and his hopes in it.

"I've been doing animation now for three years, and I would expect that I would continue to do animation after this, so the answer is yes. I did *RoboCop*, *G.I. Joe*, *Transformers* and *JEM* and a ton of other stuff that I can't even think about at the moment. As a matter of fact, I got the *Superman* job because of my animation work, not because of my comic-book work. DC didn't even know that I had this job until I told them."

If he could adapt other comic-book characters, which isn't likely, he does have some choices. "I think Hawkman would make a better animated show than it has a comic in many ways because it's such a dynamic visual. Green Lantern or Batman could be phenomenal, but do you want a silly Batman or a realistic Batman? There is a Batman show in development at ABC, and I've read the bible and the pilot script, and it's a pretty good version. Saying I would like to see certain characters animated is not really as important as how much freedom one has once they got chosen," Marv Wolfman says. "But my first choice, obviously, would be the Teen Titans." ■

Moore

(continued from page 15)

reassuring support in my superhero work in that I knew roughly what audience I was aiming my work at, what things were likely to surprise them, to affect them, to move them.

Now, this audience that has suddenly started to materialize is an entirely unknown and unquantifiable proposition. Basically, I'm having to make up the rules as I go along. It's an entirely new experience which on some levels is quite terrifying, but on other levels is very gratifying. Broadly, I feel very excited, very optimistic about the new audience that seems to be appearing.

Comics seem to me to be a medium whose time has come in that they are capable of fulfilling requirements that novels and films can not. I think comics have been in the shadow of both of those for a long time and are now starting to break out of that and to chart new creative territory, to do things that only comics can do and do *better* than films or books. Comics are ideally suited for the sort of society that we live in, where there is a strong visual bias, but at the same time, where an awful lot of television and cinema by their very nature, cannot approach the depth or complexity that a novel could. It seems to me that people will not read novels. That's a sweeping generalization, but the broad mass of the populace is less attracted to novels than it once might have been simply because they do not have images attendant. Now, films and TV are all very well, but because an audience is trapped into a film's running time, there are upper limits upon how much you can fit into a film, limits that don't hold true of the novel. Comics combine the best of both worlds. They can get in an incredible amount of density, and at the same time, can have a very attractive, free-flowing image track.

Also, they come in very small bite-sized information parcels. We're a very fast culture. We eat fast food and we probably like our entertainment to be fast as well. Perhaps people have a resistance, a regrettable one, these days to sitting down and spending a couple of evenings reading a novel. It is possible, say, to read an issue of *Watchmen* in 20 minutes and just by the nature of the form, by the combination of words and images, to have received as much information as you perhaps would have done reading half of a fair-sized novel. I don't know how you equate these things, but it certainly seems to me that in those terms, comics do have a number of advantages which are just beginning to become apparent, and as such, are ideally suited to the sort of culture we find ourselves entering into. I see the new audience that comics are getting as a welcome sign of that and I'm looking forward to seeing that audience expand rapidly in the future. ■

Fear's in the Air

Bloodscent was truly frightening to me," says Gene Colan, the veteran comics artist who illustrated the forthcoming title from Comico. "I read it and the hair on my arms was standing on end. It was *very* believable. *Tomb of Dracula* [the classic series he drew for Marvel Comics written by Marv Wolfman, see page 21] wasn't that believable; I was always aware that I was reading a story. With *Bloodscent*, I knew I was reading a story—but it felt like it *could* have happened."

A newcomer to comics, Dean Allen Schreck adapted *Bloodscent* from his own short story. Explains Schreck, "*Bloodscent* is based on a serial killer—it's very difficult not to give away too much of the plot—who has the tables turned on him, and finds out what it's like to be the prey."

By PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL

Although he had written the text version of *Bloodscent* before the comic went into production, it has yet to be published in its original form. "It was *supposed* to be, but the publisher had a delay in scheduling, so I had to pull it," Schreck says. "On the other hand, the story just seemed to belong in a graphic format."

If the writer's name sounds familiar, it's because Schreck's brother Bob is administrative director of Comico. By now, cries of "Nepotism!" are echoing through the heads of many would-be comics pros, but Schreck admits that was a problem the brothers knew would arise. "Bob had seen my work all along. He liked this story. He had the idea before he ever took it to Comico that this would be perfect for Gene Colan," Dean Schreck notes.

Bob Schreck explains, "I took my

"The challenge was to present the raw Gene Colan—pencils *only*," states Comico's administrative director Bob Schreck.

Like some atmospheric, old Warner Bros. film, *Bloodscent* recounts the events that turn one serial killer, George, into prey.

Colan agrees. "I prefer to work without a literal script," says the artist. "Many writers will tell you *exactly* what they want from frame to frame and that leaves very little for the artist to create of his own. Dean simply told the story and left it up to me to translate it visually."

The finished project is also unusual in that there is no dialogue, only captions. "The original story has no dialogue either, so it wouldn't have made sense to use dialogue in the graphic version," Dean Schreck points out. "That would have meant changing it into something it was never intended to be. What was left was to break the text down to match the sequential art."

"I compare it to the first movie version of *The Thing*," Colan says. "The first one [1951] frightened the hell out of the audience because it was underplayed and there was a certain truth to it that the second [directed in 1982 by John Carpenter] didn't capture. The first *Thing* was done with basically unknown actors and the people watching it accepted it as almost a documentary. Even the dialogue was believable. That's the feeling I got with *Bloodscent*. It was frightening and I wanted the chance to capture that atmosphere. I wanted to see if I could frighten the reader as much as the writer had."

"This is representative of the general run of my work, right now," the writer says. "I've always been interested in the horror genre. 'Why' is a good question that I don't know I can answer. It has elements of imagination that you don't find in other genres except science fiction. But horror seems to have an edge over SF for me."

Gene Colan has much less trouble explaining his own lifelong fascination with horror. "My interest in this stuff goes back to my childhood. I was five years old when I first saw *Frankenstein*, and it was a *traumatic* experience. It was the beginning of an interest in that kind of thing.

"I've always been interested in the movies," he adds. "I like atmospheric films. Most Warner Bros. films seem to take place in the rain or at night. There was always such tremendous drama in their films. It was like two people meeting for the first time and falling in love, an instant thing. It doesn't always happen, and when it does, you can't explain it. Sometimes, you experience something for the first time and you love it. I would say my interest began with a curiosity on my part about horror films and grew from there.

"I like to influence people with what I draw. I make believe that what I'm drawing I'm also seeing on a screen, and the two connect in a big way. I try to bring

brother's name off of it and then gave it to [Comico execs] Phil and Dennis La Sorda and Diana Schutz. I guess they thought I wrote it. They said it was terrific, and then I explained that Dean had written it. They said, 'Let's talk about it. If you're willing to go through the hell of explaining how this came about, we're willing. . . ' It worked out great."

Gene Colan has made his name in comics largely through his work on such horror titles as *Tomb of Dracula*, DC's *Night Force* and the recently revived *Spectre* (see original COMICS SCENE #4-5). Once he saw the original story, Colan was anxious to be involved with *Bloodscent*.

"I was in Dallas at a convention about a year ago and I met Bob Schreck. We hit it off really well and we spoke about a few possible projects," Colan recalls. "Some time later, I got a call from Bob. He had this story in mind, written by his brother Dean—who is one heck of a writer! Bob asked me if I was interested in doing another atmospheric horror-type story.

"I read the story and was so impressed with it I *had* to say yes. It was an offer I couldn't refuse."

Colan's art was derived entirely from the unpublished short story. "I let Gene draw it from the story itself, then I scripted from his art," Dean Schreck explains. "I wanted to give Gene license, to let him run with it artistically. I discovered things about the story I hadn't noticed before, not just from Gene's visual adaptation but from other people's exposure to it.

"The best art occurs when you let the subconscious run free," he notes. "It's a great feeling to discover what my subconscious put in through other people's reactions."

my interest in atmospheric films to my art as well, and try to present what I'm drawing as a film."

The art in *Bloodscent* has been reproduced *directly* from Colan's pencils.

"I wanted to see if I could frighten the reader as much as the writer had," reveals Colan.

All Bloodscent Artwork: Copyright 1988 Gene Colan/Courtesy Comico

Dean Allen Schreck's graphic adaptation of his own story is unique to comics in that it won't contain a single word of dialogue. Just captions.

Others have previously attempted this with Colan's pencils—notably Eclipse Comics on *Ragamuffins* and the second *Detectives, Inc.* series and DC on *Nathaniel Dusk I* and *II* (all written by Don McGregor). By all indications, this try is the most successful yet. Bob Schreck says that's because of some good advice and a new technique.

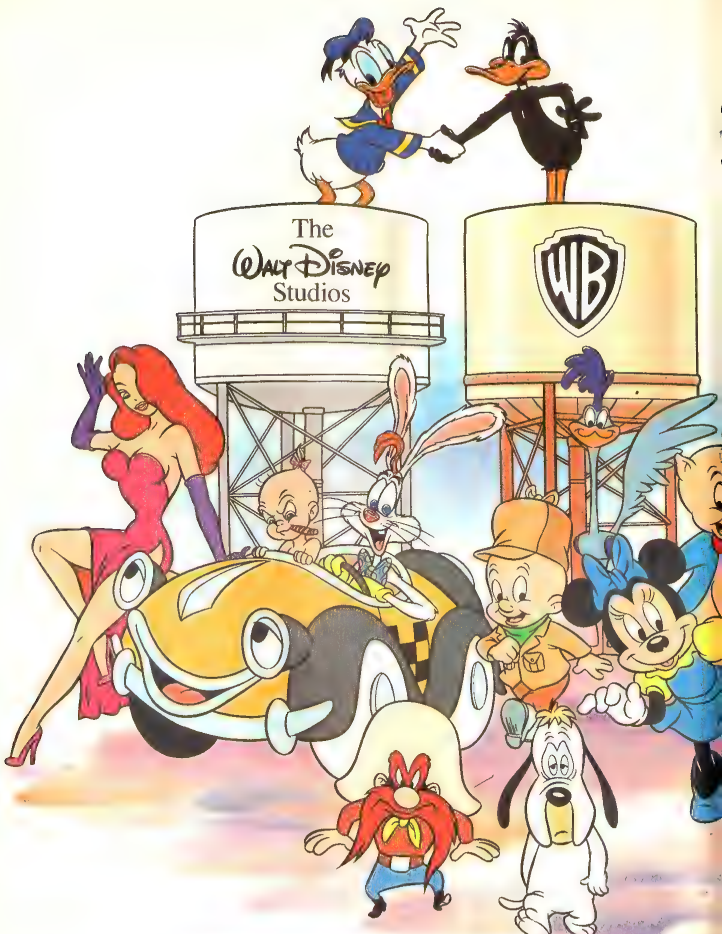
"I have to say thank you to Dean Mullaney at Eclipse Comics. He was 100 percent supportive and helpful in giving us all the information he had on how they put their two books together.

"The challenge was to present the raw Gene Colan -pencils *only*," he notes. "We at Comico pride ourselves on the jobs we've done in the past. *Space Ghost* and *Rio* were technical nightmares, so here's another nightmare we gave ourselves.

"What really turned it around for us was that Concept Color, our color separator, gave us the idea of laser-scan separating the pencil art as well as the finished color art and then *combining* the two. Previously, the pencil art had just been photographed and screened. This means we've been able to capture not just Gene's hard pencil line but his wispy textures as well."

Bob Schreck says the decision to do *Bloodscent* as a one-shot rather than as part of an anthology or as an on-going series was largely a commercial one. "We wanted to test the waters, to see how people feel about a horror comic and discover whether the sales would warrant continuing," he explains. "Anthology books don't sell well, so if we were to find a market for *Bloodscent*, it would spin off into a continuation of that storyline as a four or six-issue mini-series. But right now, it works very well as a self-contained unit, with a beginning, middle and end.

"*Bloodscent* takes us one step further into a darker realm. It's an all-out, real solid horror comic. *Grendel* [COMICS SCENE QUARTERLY #3] has horror overtones, but primarily Matt Wagner uses *Grendel* to explore aggression and the reaping of the seeds it sows. There's a thin thread of horror through it, while *Bloodscent* is an out-and-out sick and morbid tale." ■



Daffy Duck, Bugs Bunny, Tweety, Road Runner, Wile E. Coyote, Yosemite Sam, Elmer Fudd, Speedy Gonzales, Marvin the Martian, Foghorn Leghorn, Woody Woodpecker ® ©1947 Walter Lantz Productions, Inc. Betty Boop ® ©1988 Fleischer Studios.

23 Years of Arabian Nights

Finished with framing "Roger Rabbit," Richard Williams returns to his epic-in-the-making, "The Thief and the Cobbler."

By ADAM PIRANI

Having completed work as director of animation on *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (which he discussed extensively last issue), Richard Williams is now moving full speed ahead on *The Thief and the Cobbler*. A legendary project despite not yet having been completed, *The Thief* is a full-length animated feature that represents the ultimate expression of Williams' vision of what animation can do. He has been working on it for 23 years.

"It's made up of elements from the Arabian Nights tales," Williams says. "It's an original story and a funny, comic fantasy—I guess it's a comic fantasy drama, whatever that is. There are grand viziers, princesses, cobblers and invaders. The *Thief* is in the style of a Persian miniature painting, which is very suitable for animation, and it's a tailor-made movie for what *I* do best, and for what these great old animators that I worked with, Ken Harris and Art Babbitt, what they can do best. It's my personal film.

"The thing is that it's an *impossible* movie to make economically in today's world. I didn't think it would take this long—it's going to be a quarter of a century in total production time to finish it—if I'm *lucky*. The idea was, 'We haven't got the money or enough great guys to do the whole thing in the normal space of time, two or three years, so we'll just take longer, and that means we'll double up.' Ken Harris—who is wonderful, a great animator—became *three* animators, because he worked over 12 years on the picture and died, but he worked up until he was 82. And he did the best work of his life between 77 and 80.

"Anyway, we have this mammoth film which would cost about $60 million to make, and it's going to end up—we think it'll cost $10 or $12 million to finish."

Why is making *The Thief* so expensive? "If you're going to animate armies and all the stuff they normally couldn't afford to do—there's more work in it than *Fantasia*," Williams explains. "It's just the sheer number of drawings; plus it's Panavision, which makes all the drawings twice as big; and it has a large cast, and *armies*, and all the *elements*

n Legh-m, Porky Pig, Sylvester, Sam the Sheepdog, and Marc Anthony the Bulldog are Trademarks of Warner Bros., Inc. ©1988 Warner Bros. Inc
ppy Dog ©1947 Loews, Inc. ren. 1970 MGM, Inc. ® Turner Entertainment, Co. All characters used by permission.

animated, the wind and I've gone ape.

"I've done what I think animation *ought* to do. It's tailor-made for what *I* think animation's about—things you can't do in normal movies, all those things that aren't part of the mundane world. That's what it is."

Before *Roger Rabbit*, Williams subsidized *The Thief* by taking on commercial work, including ads for companies like American Express, McDonald's, Heinz, Pepsi, Ford, Shell and Levi's. (At one point in the late 1970s, Williams estimated $1.5 million earned from commercials had already been spent on *The Thief*.) But this meant finding employment—and about $36,000 weekly in wages—for a staff of 40.

After *Roger Rabbit*, Williams has decided to work *only* on his movie, with an initial crew of just seven. "I'm going to work smaller so that I don't have much overhead, and then I can have the time myself to do much of the stuff at the movie's center," he says. "You see, if you run my *Thief* for people, it's all the secondary things, not the main character, not the main plot. I have always left that for myself, and I was always running around doing work in order to feed the troops. Now, if I have very few wages to pay, then I have the time to do my work. And when the finance comes in, we'll crew up for the picture."

The idea of returning to commercials isn't something that Williams relishes. "I don't want to say no [to doing it], because I might have to, but it's the *last* thing I would do. Hopefully, never again—I've worked on 2,500 commercials.

"I'm 55, I've got to *finish* the damn thing," he says of his film. "You see, all I want with *The Thief* is the money, I don't need *anything* else." Previous efforts to find financing for the movie have been complicated by Williams' desire to retain *complete* creative control. But this time, though no deal has yet been made, he is hopeful. "There's a lot of rustling of papers at the moment," he notes. "It depends on how much of an effect the *Rabbit* has on the market.

"Frank [Marshall, *Roger Rabbit*'s coproducer] is being very helpful, but nobody has given me the dollar *yet*. But whether they do or whether they don't, we're working on *The Thief*, we're doing a suicide run. And if we *fail* to get the money—I don't care, I will just keep flying the kamikaze mission. It's the one thing we haven't tried, in all these years—to just go very small and do it oneself.

"I don't need three meals a day. I do better on one meal a day, and go swimming, and I can do a ton of work. So, if we were just a handful [of animators], we could do an awful lot without spending much money." Williams works fast, too: on *Roger Rabbit*, he notes, some people completed two drawings each day—his rate is *40* a day.

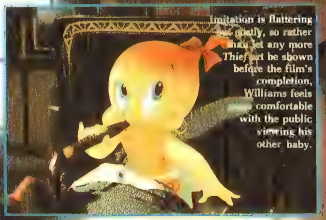
Working on *Roger Rabbit* has been beneficial to Williams in many ways. "Many of the things that are unique to *Roger Rabbit*, I realize are things that I've instinctively been doing with *The Thief* for years," he says. "And a few weeks ago, I caught on to the biggest technical idea I ever had, which directly applies to *The Thief*.

"It's the use of light, and exposures, which—if I can get the damn thing finished—should *date* all previous animated films and make them look flat as hell. Even though I'm not going for 3-D, it's a way to get more space, spacial effects—which it does already, but I was doing it instinctively. *Now*, I know *consciously* a way to drive it, as far—or further—than the *Rabbit*, to make *The Thief* very unique looking. It already does look pretty unique, but I can take it further. And it was all through just applying the same principles we really focused on in the *Rabbit*, just shove 'em over in a slightly different dress. It's a terrific idea."

The choice of Williams as animation director for *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* wasn't a gamble on an unknown. Although he has never been a staff member of any major film or TV animation production company (except for his own commercials company), Williams' experience is phenomenal. His parents were both illustrators, and he reportedly began animating at age eight on the corners of books. By 16, he was earning a living as a commercial artist. At 20, he left his native Canada and spent two years in Spain painting and playing the trumpet in a jazz band.

He moved to London, England at 22,

It has been a rags-to-rabbit story for Richard Williams as he tries to complete his own animated fantasy.



imitation is flattering
ly, so rather
than let any more
Thief art be shown
before the film's
completion,
Williams feels
comfortable
with the public
viewing his
other baby.

Soon enough, Williams isn't interested any more in executing the
old fashioned animation that attracted Valiant (Hoskins) to Jessica.

©Walt Disney Pictures & Touchstone Films. Courtesy Photofest. Copyright 1988

Photo: Bob Hobbe/Courtesy Richard Williams

The Thief and the Cobbler [illegible] talent behind its cel [illegible] and) C[illegible] Natwick [illegible] y's "Nine Old Men", who worked on groundbreaking *Snow White*, [illegible] career [illegible] animating the M[illegible]y Witch of the Desert Mountain [illegible] Williams.

Stealing a Look at "The Thief"

There's a very good reason why this concluding installment of a two-part interview with master animator Richard Williams is illustrated solely with art associated with his work on *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. Although Williams talks extensively of his epic-in-progress, *The Thief*, there are *no* full-length sketches or designs from it included here.

And that's the way Williams wants it.

At one time, he *did* release *Thief* artwork to accompany interviews and progress reports on the film. However, *The Thief* has been in production for a long time—23 years—and Williams now believes, as he told CSQ writer Adam Pirani, that publication of *Thief* art in the past has damaged his efforts. According to Williams, sketches showing "flowery art direction" gave people a wrong impression of the film while publishing designs of the main characters risks being ripped off by other artists (which Williams says "has happened").

Thievery, of course, is a key element of Williams' film. His Thief reportedly never speaks, miming dialogue instead like a Buster Keaton trapped in the world of *1001 Arabian Nights*. He steals an object and must eventually deal with the likes of Zig Zag the Grand Vizier (voiced by Vincent Price), King Nod (voiced by Anthony Quayle), Princesses Meme and Yum Yum and the Mad Holy Old Witch of the Desert Mountain. That's most of what's known.

Williams did provide *two* behind-the-scenes photos from *The Thief* (published on this page). Study them closely. Note the *Thief* sketches and designs in the background, on the studio walls behind Williams and colleagues. It's just a brief sample, just a taste of *The Thief*.

—*David McDonnell*

Photo: Frank Hermann/Courtesy Richard Williams

Master animator Ken Harris, known for his Bugs Bunny work at Warner Bros., along with Roy Naisbitt, contribute their part to Williams' ongoing Arabian Knight.

Photo: Richard Lam/Courtesy Richard Williams

Williams teamed with another animation legend, Chuck Jones, to produce *A Christmas Carol*, an Oscar winner.

LETTERING

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COMICS SCENE
475 Park Avenue South, 8th Floor
New York, NY 10016

. . . Not only did I share a comic book heaven like Editor David McDonnell's (Word Balloons, CSQ #3), it was the *exact same* one. The late '60s found me at Pancho's Newsstand every Saturday morning in Big Spring, Texas and if I had any money left over, I walked to the used book store next to the Crystal Cafe where a one-armed gent dealt incredible comics deals.

I didn't think anyone else in Big Spring read comics but me. When I read you were from the tiny town of Big Spring, I had to write.

In closing, I must say I was overjoyed to see COMICS SCENE return to the stands. It is by far the pinnacle of comics journalism coverage. From articles to design and layout, a thoroughly enjoyable reading experience.

By the way, I visited Big Spring a few months ago and Pancho's hasn't changed a bit.

Rick Forgus
8120 E. Montebello Avenue
Scottsdale, AZ 85253

. . . "Batman: Take One" was the article I've been eagerly awaiting, and with Sam Hamm, no less! It was a top-rate interview that answered most of my own questions. The interview left me alternately cheering Hamm and gasping, "Oh, No No No No!"

I sincerely hope we loyal comic fans won't be forsaken, along with Batman's powerful character, all in the name of mass appeal. Batman already *has* the character, since he is the Terminator with a cape and pointy mask. He has the same grim, cold attitude that crowds love in Arnold Schwarzenegger's butt kicking movies. Batman can work on his own, and should be allowed to try. Tampering is what killed Superman at the box office; the movies got more silly than his comic books ever would. Batman, however, has it all.

I'm thrilled that the movie will touch on the chest insignia as a target, since it does indeed serve a purpose. I also agree with Hamm completely that jaws should drop at the sight of Batman or Joker. There is *no* other way to handle them if not as unique occurrences. I am glad to hear that Hamm also regards Batman as a tool of terror. I only interject that Batman uses brutality to perpetuate it, not just relying on a costume.

I do have a few problems, though. It made me uneasy to hear Hamm say that he feels he can "tweak" with Batman. Treating Batman as an element for comedy is like the Brady Bunch going porno. Batman has trained for years, so clumsy stunts [such as his cape in the subway] are unlikely. If any laughs are to be had, they should be with Robin's inexperience and attempt at lightening Batman's mood.

Another problem I have is the minimizing of Batman's "boring genesis." The vicious slaughter of his parents is the focal point of Bruce Wayne's actions and life. Hamm could touch on the murders through nightmares or maybe flashbacks that would reflect the impact it had on Wayne's psyche. This single event is what made Wayne such a radical force for justice, and is essential to understand what motivates him. So you see that Batman is most certainly *not* a "bizarre hobby."

My biggest problem though, is the unmasking of Batman by a few street toughs. If he has trained since childhood, it follows that he would be a good deal more advanced than some hoods. They couldn't get near enough to land a punch, much less unmask him. If Batman couldn't beat a few hoods, he wouldn't make it one night. A more satisfying scenario is that Wayne hawks a quick change in an alley, and is seen. Possibly by a child, since Gotham knows Bruce Wayne like New York knows Donald Trump.

Now, I want to clear up a misconception about Batman's cape. Andrew Jackson wore a cape to a duel with a wealthy Washington socialite. The socialite was a notoriously good shot, and Jackson hoped to throw off his aim with his cape. It worked. Batman wears one for the same reason that criminals don't play by the rules.

The first dynamic duo were Douglas Croft (as Robin, left) and Lewis Wilson (Batman) in the 1943 Columbia Pictures serial.

The cape works, and history has proven it.

Shaun Treat
Route 1, Box 262
Farmington, AK 72730

. . . A suggestion for Sam Hamm: Stick with Ray Liotta for the Joker; Michael Pare, who starred in *Streets of Fire* and now *Houston Knights*, would make a great Batman. He has the build and attitude, unlike the human pillow Adam West. Could we hear more about the *American Flagg!* movie? Being one of my favorite comics, I would be very interested as to how it's being handled

Ronco
4229 Lenore Lane NW
Washington, DC

. . . What does everybody have against Adam West? He's an awesome actor, just like your magazine. People just don't realize what Adam West has done for the character on the screen. Every try to transfer Batman to the screen before the late '60s show was a bomb. Yet, the TV series comes along and you have one of the biggest fads ever started in this country. As Joel Eisner, an avid *Batman* fan who wrote *The Official Batman Batbook*, states, "The popularity of the Batman TV series laid the foundation for other TV manifestations of Batman and his cohorts." And that includes the upcoming *Batman* movie you have been covering so very diligently. If West had been cast for the role back then, and it was such a huge success, he's the best bet for the role of the Batman in the new movie! C'mon, we all know what West says in the article "Adam West: The Dark Knight Dismayed" (CSQ #1) was true. If you want a good movie that'll be a hit, hire Adam West for the job, he won't let you down.

Eric Grignol
1105 Marianna Avenue
Erie, PA 16509

. . . It can *not* happen again. After nearly 20 years of humiliating perception by the public, DC and Warner Bros. have a chance to redeem their most powerfully conceived character, Batman.

Denny O'Neil, the editor of *Batman*, raved over the script and the writer, Sam Hamm. Hamm's

Is this the face beneath Batman's cowl? Michael Keaton looks *Clean & Sober* at the thought.

Clean & Sober Photo: Marv Elliot Marks. Copyright 1988 Warner Bros Inc.

script for the upcoming *Batman* movie was approved by DC. The movie was to be straightforward, not like the 1960s camp TV show. In COMICS SCENE QUARTERLY #3, Hamm stated who he thought would be good candidates for Batman and the Joker. When interviewer Carr D'Angelo mentioned that Jack Nicholson was being considered, Hamm said he would be too old to portray "his" Joker the way he had written it.

Nicholson got the role.

Next, we learned that the movie was to be filmed in London. New York City is Gotham.

Then, it happened. My worst nightmare.

Who would play Batman, the obsessed, unstoppable, genuinely tough and scary creature of the night? Who? Who?

Mr. Mom, Michael Keaton.

How could DC do it to themselves again? Why would anyone choose a short, balding wimpy comedian to portray the Dark Knight? Didn't comics publishers and moviemakers learn that unless they treat their material seriously, it will *not* sell?

Christopher Molloy
1975 83rd Street
Brooklyn, NY 11214

. . . To have cast Michael Keaton in the role of Batman is to have made the most horrible mistake that could have been made on this picture.

For *The Batman* to be done correctly as a film, it must have a deadly, gritty, serious air, and to put it bluntly, Michael Keaton is not a serious actor. I fear that the comic talent behind *Mr. Mom, Gung Ho* and *Night Shift* will desecrate the Batman legend beyond repair.

There's a whole town of actors in Hollywood; Michael Keaton is not the man. Lewis (*Sable*) Van Bergen, Tim (*Captain Power*) Dunigan, *anybody* would be a better choice. Casting an unknown actor, like Christopher Reeve in *Superman*, or Lynda Carter in *Wonder Woman* would be by far the best route upon which to embark. Another possibility is to cast an athlete or gymnast who's looking for a film role. Michael Keaton will destroy the film with out-of-place comic timing and silly jokes, and he won't guarantee *any* box office (remember *Johnny Dangerously*?).

The producers have expressed concerns in the past regarding the necessity to do *Batman* seriously and humorlessly, always echoing with trepidations regarding the difficulties of doing a "serious" comic-book superhero movie. Casting Michael Keaton somehow indicates that the *Batman* producers have lost faith in their product and that they've chosen to take the "easy way out" and make fun of the character instead. This is a cop-out, and an insult to Batman's legion of fans. If they're determined to make a bad *Batman* film, then they should get Adam West and do something called *Still the Batman*. At least the world is prepared for it and has already accepted it.

Doug Clark
1355 Hayne Road
Hillsborough, CA 94010

. . . At last, a comprehensive, interesting, flashy, informative comics publication (the first of its kind in South Africa, as far as I know).

Since, for some obscure reason, most of the critically acclaimed new mini-series or series are unavailable in South Africa, it comes to an incredible relief to at least be able to read about these frustratingly elusive comics. (Case in point: *Lone Wolf & Cub*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Green Arrow*, etc.) Some comics (eg. *The Dark Knight Returns*, *Watchmen*, *The Shadow—Blood & Judgment*, *Swamp Thing*) are available solely through mail-order with overseas comic shops. A very expensive undertaking. So for now, South African comic buffs have to be content with collecting a few titles and reading about the others in the pages of COMICS SCENE.

Your first issue was tremendous. The format was interesting, vibrant and well arranged and the content was pleasing in that it covered the whole comics spectrum. I think your "gut-wrenchingly awesome" magazine, however, could be improved with the following: A) A review page. A reliable comic authority (perhaps a writer or editor) could review more worthwhile titles. B) Posters. Lots of graphic, pull-out, flashy, color posters of various characters in stunning poses. C) A letter column, although I'm assuming this will appear with the next few issues. D) More special offers, subscriptions, comic shop ads etc. (That are available to overseas readers).

So far, I'm very impressed with your magazine and if it does keep coming, you'll have my $R10.95 every month (or however often you decide to publish it)

Ruy Da Assuncao
Johannesburg, South Africa

. . . And so the Mighty Thor becomes the latest Marvel character to get the live-action television treatment. And once again, as with Spider-Man, the Hulk, Dr. Strange and Captain America (1944 and 1979) before him, this incarnation is but a pale imitation of the original. You would think that by now the TV producers would know how to handle superheroes properly, but instead, they keep insisting on superimposing them against the standard cops-and-robbers background.

The funny thing is, this syndrome seems endemic to Marvel's heroes. Whatever faults the movie serials, big-budget motion pictures, and TV adaptations of DC's Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman may have had, at least the spirit of their source was, for the most part, kept reasonably intact. Moreover, their costumes looked like their comic-book counterparts Not so with Marvel's crew.

I had hoped that with New World's acquisition of Marvel Comics, other media adaptations of their heroes would be more faithful to the four-color originals. Well, if *The Incredible Hulk Returns* is a preview of what we can look forward to in future *Hulk* movies which introduce other superheroes, then I would rather not see them produced. Although the TV-movie was somewhat entertaining, it was ultimately unsatisfying and, if the Thor series becomes reality, detrimental to the character in the long run. How many people now identify Tarzan with Johnny Weissmuller's inarticulate savage? Or Lex Luthor with Gene Hackman's tongue-in-cheek portrayal? Not to mention Adam West's campy caped crusader with the Batman!

The Marvel Age of Comics may have occurred more than a quarter of a century ago on the printed page, but it has yet to make its presence felt on the screen.

Abelardo D. Flores
3292 Soldan Drive
San Diego, CA 92154

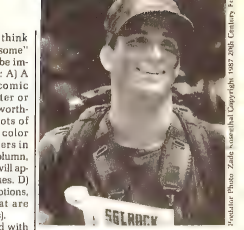
. . . I used to watch the *Incredible Hulk* TV show, and enjoyed it such as it was. However, the whole time I was watching, I was also praying that David Banner would be exposed to more gamma rays and become more like the comic's Hulk. It never happened.

Then, I heard about the Hulk's return and I thought, ah-ha! Banner's fooling around with gamma rays again. An accident will occur, the Hulk will reappear more savage and powerful than before, and Thor will fight him in a great show of power. It never happened.

The blame for this is two-fold. First, New World Pictures. Come on, guys, you own Marvel Comics. If anyone should know how these characters should look and act, it's you. You could have created something new, different and great on television. Instead, you took the cheap way out to avoid paying for the costly effects that should have been there. Secondly, Nick Corea. You call that story believable? There were holes you could drive a truck through. You also state that you didn't have to monkey with Thor much. Really? The Thor I read each month is the powerful Asgardian god of thunder, not some unbelievable Viking warrior who acts more like a crusader.

I understand that the movie did well in the ratings. That means we'll be seeing more of this. But, as far as I'm concerned, if this is the kind of material we have to look forward to, forget it. The Marvel characters always seem to suffer in other media. I don't know why, since they would make such a difference done correctly.

Leo Brault
Address Withheld



Producer Photo: Zade Rosenthal Copyright 1987 20th Century Fox

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Williams

(continued from page 40)

since then don't turn me on, they tend to turn me *off*. In the 1940s, you have this promising art which could go absolutely a thousand different ways, all wonderful, and then somehow it fans out, and it becomes echoes of that."

Williams has an idea of why this potential was never fulfilled. "I think after the strike [at the Disney Studios, in 1941, which split the animation community], Disney diversified. Walt Disney was tired of dealing with these pain-in-the-neck animators, and he kept his own crew of very good guys, and they did things like *The Jungle Book*—which, gosh, *The Jungle Book* brought me to my knees. Milt Kahl's animation of the tiger and the snake and everything was wonderful, but the picture isn't a great conception as a *picture*. It's great entertainment, but it's not what I would want to do. What turns me on is, 'How did you do that tiger so wonderfully, and the snake?'—because it's so inventive. But as a movie, *The Jungle Book* isn't inventive, the storytelling isn't inventive. It's just a wonderful romp, like an extended short.

"Whereas in *Dumbo*, you have a whole *world*, you somehow buy the world of the circus, you believe there are many people in the movie, not just a few main characters walking in and out on a pan [camera movement]. It's all *rich*. Even the train is a great character. I want to animate a *world*, like *Snow White* has its own world, *Pinocchio* has a world, *Dumbo* has a world. *Jungle Book* doesn't, *Sword in the Stone* doesn't, *Cinderella* doesn't. And the UPA development back then [where some of Disney's disaffected animators eventually worked, producing cartoons such as *Gerald McBoing-Boing* and *Mr. Magoo* was a kind of a non-starter, it doesn't really get you anywhere.

"I would like to see animation be more individual, or to do my work, whatever it is, and have it exist in a complete *world*. The world of *The Thief* is an Arabian Nights dream world, in the 10th century or something. It's an analogy to today, but it's a complete *land*, it's *real* to me. And that's what I want to do. When I see things that *aren't* like that, that aren't pushing the medium or are just trying to copy it, it turns me off.

"The nice thing about *Roger Rabbit* is that it's a hip rehash. The hip part is the Zemeckis/Amblin side, you know, saying this is a joke for cartoons: This is what would happen if cartoons were in the room with us, this is how they would behave, which is hilarious. But I wouldn't want to do anything like it *again*. I don't ever want to draw like a 1940s animator again, *if* I can help it."

Williams believes that he and his coworkers have managed to avoid merely copying and echoing animation's previous glories. They can create new worlds in the medium. "We're not cartoon people. We come from painting or something else, and do cartoons—it's like, the guys who can do the funniest cartoons are the best draftsmen. Disney's best draftsman was Milt [Kahl]; he was their greatest animator, in my view and [that of] many other good guys. Marc Davis was a very fine draftsman, and he was one of the greatest animators.

"The Woody Woodpecker school of animation turns me right off. I don't think it's funny. One of the things I noticed with Ken Harris—who I always thought was the funniest Warner Bros. animator and was generally considered to be their best guy—his work was very conservative and very subtle. It wasn't broad action at all, and his stuff was *much* funnier. He was like that: He would say, 'I can't stand this jumping around.' He was actually *subtle*, and I said, 'Why don't we build on *that* part of it?'

"I want to have everything [for *The Thief*]. Well, you must have a lot of *money* to have everything: We have the talent, the equipment, the story. We've got everything we need *except* the money."

Despite his own vision, *The Thief* being a movie that would be "impossible to make economically in today's world," Williams does have hope for the future of animated movies as a sector of commercial filmmaking. "Ironically, I give great credit to Disney," he says, "because [Disney CEO] Michael Eisner wants to revitalize animation, and [Disney production head] Jeffrey Katzenberg is absolutely committed to making an animated feature a year. And they're spending the money: They've spent the money on the *Rabbit* to see it right, and they want to do *endless* pictures. They just want to make great animated movies, and they see themselves as revitalizing that whole area of the feature film—and they're doing it."

Disney's revitalization process is something in which Williams himself may eventually become involved. "We're very interested in working with each other, because, as *they* say, we're very compatible. The only problem is, Disney is doing what they're doing, and I'm *trying* to do what I'm *trying* to do. They've got the money and the crew, and they're going. I, in my way, am doing the same—I mean, I just want to *finish* my picture, and it's just one picture for God's sake, not the end of the world. I just want to finish my picture, and it's not a Disney kind of thing."

Comments Richard Williams, "I'm a guy with a particular vision of his own, and I keep saying to everybody, 'I come with this *Thief* attached, and until I can get rid of it, I don't want to *look* at anything else.' It's very hard for me because unless somebody helps me get this monkey off my back, I've got the damn monkey on here and he's *heavy*. You know, I just want to get him *off*, the best I can, and then, let's see." ■

A boy and his sea serpent. A boat named *Leakin' Lena*. The boisterous Captain Huffenpuff and the insidious Dishonest John. Worldwide adventures, outrageous situations, off-the-wall satire and corny puns. The stuff that cartoon classics are made of.

This fall, Cecil the Seasick Sea Serpent and his little buddy Beany return to Saturday morning to entertain a new generation of kids, as well as adults who fondly remember the original series.

"We *definitely* want to preserve the spirit of what Bob Clampett was doing: the irreverence, the creativity, and what ever it takes to surprise an audience, to tell the story, to show the characters off and do the old series credit," says story editor Paul Dini. ABC selected Dini to write the show based on his past work on Lucasfilm's *Ewoks/Droids Adventure Hour*, where he served as story editor and associate producer.

Also on hand is director/producer John Kricfalusi, who worked on new episodes of *The Jetsons*, and on last season's *Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures*.

The new *Beany & Cecil* is being produced at DIC Enterprises, the studio responsible for such fare as *The Real Ghostbusters*, *Heathcliff*, *Dinosaucers* and *Starcom*. Production assistance will come from Wang Productions/Cuckoo's Nest Studios in Taiwan.

Although Beany and Cecil's creator, Bob Clampett, passed away in 1984, his wife Sody is supervising the new series as an executive producer, with son Bob Clampett Jr. as associate producer.

"We have a *wonderful* bunch of artists," says Sody Clampett, comparing them to the original *Beany & Cecil* team. "We had a lot of excitement then, too. Of course, in '62, Bob used many of the people he had worked with at Warners. But this is a lot of really fresh new talent that John Kricfalusi has brought in, and it's just exciting to see it all coming together."

Years ago, Bob Clampett Sr. had been a veteran animation director at Warner Bros., his best-known cartoons being "Porky's Bedtime Story," "Coal Black and De Sebben Dwarfs" and "Draftee

Bob Clampett's characters get ready to face a new audience.

BEANY & CECIL™ Sail Again!

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"They *all* remember *Beany & Cecil*. So, that's an incredible amount of responsibility when you write *Beany*," notes Dini, who employs this Thug from the "Brotherhood of B.L.E.C.H." to keep fans away.

Daffy." He developed the characters of Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck and Sylvester the Cat, and he created Tweety Bird. Clampett left Warners in 1946 to concentrate on his own projects, combining his interest in puppetry with the newly-emerging medium of television. The result was *Time for Beany*, a live-action puppet show that premiered February 28, 1949 on KTLA in Los Angeles and was syndicated nationally by Paramount.

The series starred Beany, an adventuresome lad who sailed around the world with his uncle, Captain Horatio K. Huffenpuff, aboard the good ship *Leakin' Lena*. Tagging along with them was Cecil, a lovable, gullible sea serpent who looked out for Beany, his best pal. Their chief adversary was ("Nya-ha-ha!") Dishonest John, who enjoyed making their lives miserable while trying to profit from their good fortune.

Cecil and "D.J." were voiced by Stan Freberg, known for his satiric radio and commercial work and his more recent narration of *The Wuzzles*. Beany and Captain Huffenpuff were voiced by Daws Butler, later to perform such notable characters as Yogi Bear, Huckleberry Hound, Wally Gator and Cap'n Crunch. Some early scripts were written by Bill Scott, who would later be known for his work on *Rocky & Bullwinkle* (voicing Bullwinkle), *George of the Jungle* and Disney's *Adventures of the Gummi Bears*. The 15-minute show ran at 6:30 p.m. from 1949 to 1958, earning three Emmys.

In 1959, Clampett made an animated TV pilot for ABC, *Beany & Cecil Meet Billy the Squid*, released as a theatrical feature overseas as *A Bob Clampett Cartoon with Beany & Cecil* by United Artists. Meanwhile, Mattel Toys had been sponsoring *Matty's Funday Funnies* which showed Casper the Ghost and other Famous Studio cartoons. Mattel decided to dump Casper in favor of TV cartoons featuring Beany and Cecil. The show became *Matty's Funnies with Beany & Cecil*, premiering January 6, 1962 on ABC, where it ran in primetime for the rest of the year. In 1963, the network aired episodes on Saturday mornings as *The Beany & Cecil Show*, and it lasted in reruns until September 1967. Clampett made 26 half-hour shows, each containing three episodes. In the cartoon version, the characters were voiced by Clampett himself (incidentals such as Snorky and Hare-cules Hare), his wife Sody (the Leading Ladybug) and son Bobby (Buffalo Billy and Little Homer), Jim McGeorge (Captain Huffenpuff), and Erv Shoemaker (Cecil and Dishonest John). Walker Edmonston, Don Messick and Joan Gardner provided other voices.

In 1983, Bob and Sody Clampett made the entire series available on videocassette, in 13 volumes from RCA-Columbia.

"That put *Beany & Cecil* out in the market for people who realized how good they really were," Sody Clampett says. "I think much of that had to do with the reason that ABC came to us and said, 'Gee, we really like *Beany & Cecil*. We would like to do it again.' "

So, after an absence of nearly 20 years, Beany and Cecil return in 13 new half-hour shows.

Unfortunately, we got a late pick-up," Sody Clampett explains. "We didn't know until April 28 that we were picked up. And that puts us in jeopardy quite a bit because it doesn't really give us enough time. The first show is in September. When you figure that in the '60s when Bob and I did the 26 half-hour cartoon shows in two years—now, we're doing 13 half-hours in *six months*—it's pretty incredible."

The new shows will be split into segments: a 13-minute adventure in two acts, a six-minute character comedy, and three minutes of short "bumpers" and gags produced by director John Kricfalusi. Two shows will be 30-minute specials, one of which will be a birthday party reuniting the cast and supporting characters of the original series.

Still, Jim McGeorge will be back as Captain Huffenpuff, although the rest of the cast will be voiced by new talent. McGeorge will also voice Crowy, *Lena*'s lookout (who didn't speak in the original) and occupant of the ship's crow's nest.

"We're also anxious to get in some of the good old standbys like Go Man Van Gough, Tearalong the Dotted Lion, Cecil's girl friend, Cecilia McCoy and Ping Pong the giant ape. In other words,

A distinctive John Kricfalusi Princess makes her way through "The Framed Freep."

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there *will* be stories with those characters that everybody loved," Clampett adds.

"It's interesting when Bob created incidental characters, you weren't always sure which ones would really catch on," she notes. "But a character like Go Man Van Gogh was very well received. Even though he was only in one cartoon [and in "bridges" that linked the original show together], people talk about him. So, it's interesting what makes a character recep-

For every good Freep, there's one bad Freep.

Art: Copyright 1988 Bob Clampett Productions

tive to the audience. I really feel that Bob had his thumb on the audience and what they enjoy."

Paul Dini stresses that the new stories will *not* be remakes. "If we tried to just redo the old cartoons, it would be pretty dismal; it would come across as just imitation and fall flat," he explains.

"The original's charm was that there were many then-current references and some very topical sideline characters, that were hysterical in the old scripts. Looking back on those today, you can catch the references if you know anything about popular culture of the time. Trying to do those exact same jokes or characters, you would totally baffle today's audience.

"There'll be some parodies of modern things, but that's it as far as updating. You know, the same making fun of certain elements of popular culture will be there, and that's what Clampett did very well," Dini says. "We're really not updating the stories so much as just trying to continue on with the feel of what made the original cartoon series in the '60s great, and that was the irreverence, the crazy comedy and the focus on the characters and their quirks."

The producers have discussed adapting material previously used in the *Time for Beany* puppet show.

"I have seven years of those films," Sody Clampett annouces. "There are so many wonderful stories that Bob had in those that haven't been tapped. And Bobby [Bob Clampett Jr.] has researched much of that. We met with Squire Rushnell [head of ABC-TV children's programming], and he was very anxious to get into some of the old material because he realizes how many fans we have out there who really loved it. So, we do draw on a great many of Bob's original ideas, and put them together with new meanings for the times."

Other stories may come from unused material from the first cartoon series. When Bob Clampett was developing it, he concocted more than a hundred story premises in one weekend. Only 78 of them were used in the show. According to Bob Clampett Jr., the rest may eventually see the light in the new series.

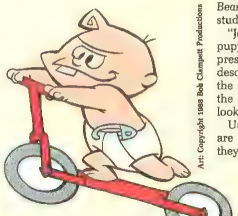
Art: Copyright 1988 Bob Clampett Productions

Dishonest John (D.J.) dresses the part for his debut on "Radio with a Bite."

When John Kricfalusi started working on the new model sheets, Bob Clampett Jr. made a video of the original Cecil puppet in various poses, which Kricfalusi used as a reference. He also viewed some *Time for Beany* episodes, freeze-framing them to study the poses and expressions.

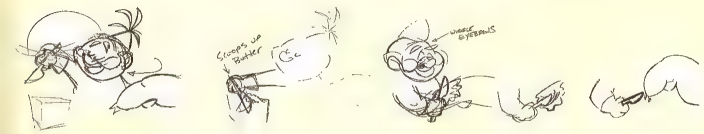
"John particularly liked the look of the puppet, the folds in the neck and the expressions," Sody Clampett says. She describes the new designs as "very true to the old characters. It's a blend between the old character and how the puppet looked."

Usually, whenever cartoon favorites are resurrected for Saturday morning, they get somewhat altered. To wit: Casper



Art: Copyright 1988 Bob Clampett Productions

***Beany & Cecil* inspired many people, myself included, to do cartoons," relates story editor Paul Dini.**



A tender moment between Cecil and his serpentine sweety, Cecilia, is sabotaged by that slinky sleazeball, Dishonest John.

Art: Copyright 1988 Bob Clampett Productions

ter. But if there are funny things, we're definitely going to fight for those. You have to stick up for your work. That's the bottom line.

"Look at it this way. There has been a great deal written about *Mighty Mouse* in *Spin*, in the *Wall Street Journal*. *Time* magazine called it one of the 10 best shows on the air. These are all in the mainstream marketplace, not fan publications. And the show did get known for that type of humor, that type of irreverence. That's one thing we would do well to point out to the censors and to people who want to back down from making a show everything it could be.

"How many articles do you see about those watered-down efforts on Saturday morning? You don't see *any*. They just fall into the heading of 'general Saturday morning crap.' These are shows that have been so 'blanderized' and watered-down that they fall by the wayside."

Notes Dini, "The reason why *Mighty Mouse* didn't get shuffled off to the side is because it takes chances. The world didn't end because of that. And I don't think kids are imitating Mighty Mouse by

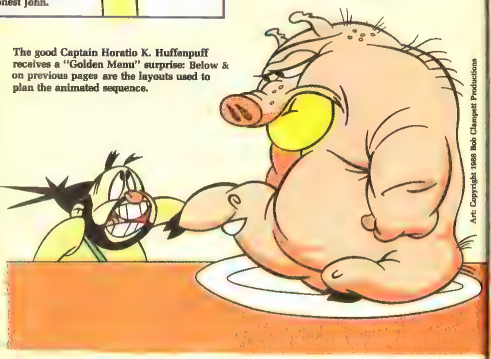
(continued on page 60)

the Ghost has teamed up with Space Angels; Popeye and the Pink Panther have sons; the Flintstones became kids.

Paul Dini assures that nothing so drastic will happen to Beany's favorite sea serpent. "We haven't junked it up. We haven't made Cecil a baby, or made Beany a teenager with a couple of friends who solve mysteries. We haven't screwed up the concept. It's just business as usual with Beany and Cecil going off on crazy adventures or else involved in some activity around the ship and usually with some interference from Dishonest John."

Yet the crew of *Leakin' Lena* may still have to contend with interference from another source: ABC's Broadcast Standards and Practices.

"It's annoying when you have a great bit, a terrific visual, a funny verbal gag, great-looking characters, and whatever the reason, it falls under debate," Dini complains. "You just have to keep going, though. You're not going to throw up your hands and say, 'Well, I guess there's just no ending for the story.' In a way, it challenges you to think up something bet-

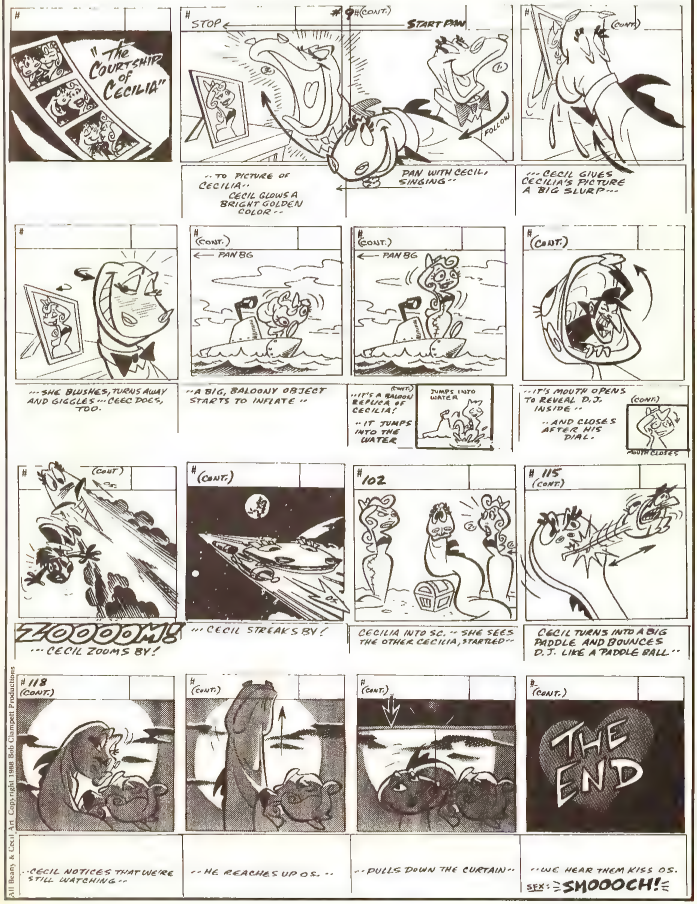


The good Captain Horatio K. Huffenpuff receives a "Golden Menu" surprise: Below & on previous pages are the layouts used to plan the animated sequence.

Art: Copyright 1988 Bob Clampett Productions

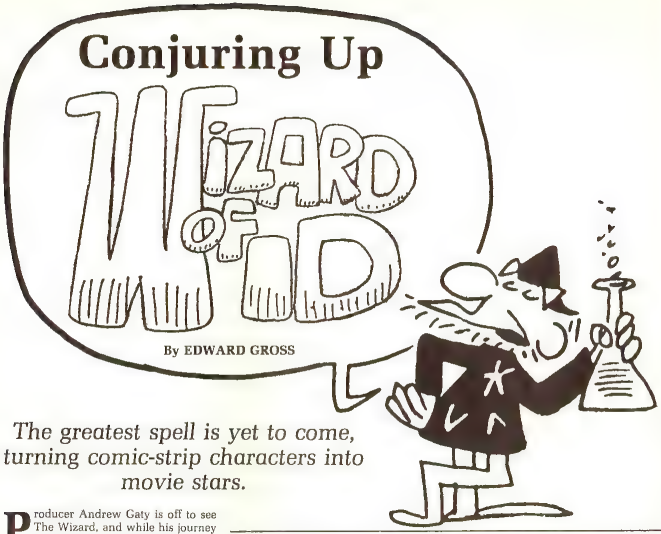
Selected Storyboards

Written by PAUL DINI
Storyboards by BRUCE TIMM



All Beany & Cecil Art Copyright 1988 Bob Clampett Productions

Conjuring Up



By EDWARD GROSS

The greatest spell is yet to come, turning comic-strip characters into movie stars.

All Wizard of Id Art: Brant Parker/Copyright 1988 North America Syndicate, Inc.

Producer Andrew Gaty is off to see The Wizard, and while his journey has not been a hop, skip and a jump down the old yellow-brick road, he thinks the end result will be worth the trip.

The "Wizard" in question is the motion picture adaptation of the Johnny Hart-Brant Parker comic strip, *The Wizard of Id*. It's a project the Australian-born producer has been developing for three years, and one which looks like it will be going before the cameras next year under the directorial guidance of David & Jerry Zucker, two of the three men responsible for *Airplane!*, *Kentucky Fried Movie*, *Top Secret!* and *Ruthless People*.

"They're very visual directors," enthuses Gaty, "and actually deceptively good. *Airplane!* was a very slapsticky type of film, but *Ruthless People*, when you think about it, had very little slapstick in it. They managed to get comedy from a situation rather than from people falling over. Thankfully, they're great fans of the strip."

Gaty himself has been a fan of Parker & Hart's medieval comic strip for the majority of its 24-year run in newspaper syndication, and three years ago, he began pursuing the rights for a film version.

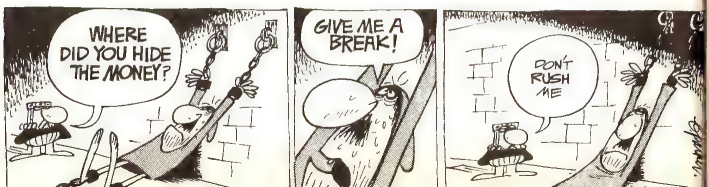
"One Saturday morning in Australia," he recalls, "I said, 'This would really make a great film,' and my wife said, 'That's about the 20th time you've said it. Why don't you *do* something?' That's how it all started, and it was very difficult because Johnny Hart is a recluse and was not anxious to sell the rights. He had been approached by many people, including Steven Spielberg, but maybe I was more persistent than the others because I was able to secure the rights."

Actually, according to Johnny Hart, the opposite approach by Gaty is what got him the keys to the kingdom of *Id*.

"Spielberg," says Hart, "was interested, but he didn't want me to write it or have anything to do with its writing. I suggested something about the casting and he said that he didn't want anyone to tell him how to cast his movies. We both agreed that we had reached an impasse, and decided, in a very friendly manner, to forget about it. Later, he wrote me a letter and told me that I was a nice person, that he enjoyed the strip and wished me success with someone else.

"Andrew wasn't pushy," Hart continues. "I met him and liked him. He was

In the tradition of *Taxi*'s Louie DePalma, the filmmakers promise to provide a soft spot for the King of Id.

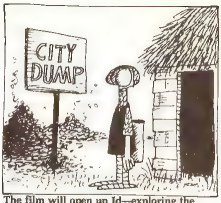


really nice and was definitely interested in devoting his entire life to *The Wizard*, and doing it right. Not rushing and not just interested in getting a hunk of film into the theaters to make some money, and then go off to something else. There's a genuine respect and reverence for the property."

Singer/composer Paul Williams took the first crack at a screenplay for the film, which was then rewritten by Steven de Souza, which, in turn, is being rewritten by Dana Olsen.

"The script is very true to the comic," says de Souza—who has also penned the film version of *The Flintstones* (CSQ #1)—explaining his screenplay draft. "It's all the characters that you know and love, and the King is not cleaned up at all. He's pretty nasty and vicious. But I did take a few conceptual liberties. I made Gwen the King's niece so that he has one soft spot in his heart. She's something that he really cares about, something that propels the story forward. Remember, Adolph Hitler liked dogs.

"The other thing, which is great fun," he adds, "is that she refuses to believe the beginning, nobody knows that Sir Rodney is a complete coward. With great effort, he has managed to convince all the people that he is the greatest knight in Id. He even has a publicity agent, but during this story's course, he has a crisis which reveals to everyone that he is an incompetent coward. This enables us to get some—I shudder to use this word—*depth* in the cartoon character. The funnies can be very shallow. What is Charlie Brown's problem that he keeps trusting Lucy with that football? Is he a masochist, or what? When he finally goes into therapy, who does he see? Lucy! Is Snoopy really a mutant dog who can talk and think? There are all these questions which go into it."



The film will open up Id—exploring the countryside beyond the castle.

Andrew Gaty has handled the necessary rewrites in good spirit, believing that the end result will be worth the effort.

"*The Wizard of Id* is a very complex story to get into perspective," Gaty says, "because comic strips are episodic. The only constant factor about them is the characters. *The Wizard of Id* is only three or four panels long, and what we've got to be careful of is coming up with a story that rings true. There's really no story to speak of in the comic strip, so we have to invent everything. I've been reading the comic for years, and in my mind's vision, they had built this castle and the rest of the country was very poor, and very small. But we haven't actually seen the countryside. So first, we have to figure out exactly what the kingdom is like. Where is it? We know that most of the time they're under the threat of the Huns, but the rest is, 'What happens?' It's not that easy. We've now had four or five scripts done, and we feel as though we're coming close. The one that Steve wrote is hysterical, but it hasn't yet captured the spirit of *The Wizard of Id*, and that's what we're looking for."

Although screenwriter Dana Olsen has been unable to work on his drafts of the script due to the writers' strike, he has some very definite ideas regarding the comic strip's adaptation.

"The biggest challenge is going to be maintaining the strip's personality," he says. "Of course, the job of turning it into a motion picture that runs three acts with a story that runs through the picture is a challenge in itself. As a motion picture writer, all you're usually concerned with is structuring it to fit the film's length, and trying to get a story that has a beginning, a middle and an end.

"I think the advantage," Olsen adds, "is that you're dealing with well-defined characters, and the challenge is that you have to find a relatively simple story with

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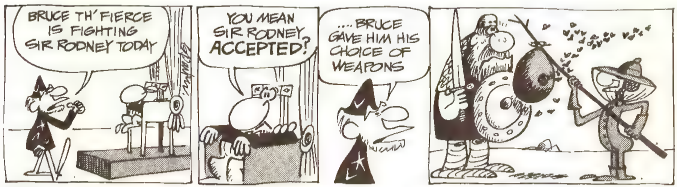


"What is Charlie Brown's problem that he keeps trusting Lucy with that football?" asks screenwriter Steven de Souza, who promises to at least give some irrational reason for Sir Rodney's cowardly behavior.

stories in *The National Inquire*, which is a paper we invented, about what a vicious S.O.B. her uncle is. She considers it all completely unsubstantiated gossip, although she ultimately finds out the truth and it breaks the illusion. This breaks the King's heart, which is like the situation with Danny De Vito in *Taxi*. Maybe once a year they would give him five minutes of pathos. That's an approach taken in the screenplay.

"Another thing, and it gives us a great deal of mileage, is that at the story's

"The *Wizard of Id* is only three or four panels long, and we've got to be careful to come up with a story that rings true," notes producer Andrew Gaty.

THOUGHT BALLOONS

To some, they may only be comic books, but to fans, they're exciting, entertaining, even thought-provoking experiences told in four-color and black & white.

And to many others, they're just for kids—the fabled "funny books," yet another pacifier for hyperactive youth.

But to fans, comics are for adults as well and that's where the trouble begins. Are they too sexy? Too violent? Will they cause juvenile delinquency and teenage pregnancy and massive illiteracy? Will comics seduce the innocent?

Definitely not.

Others, however, aren't so sure. So, there are arrests for selling "adult" comics (Friendly Frank's in Michigan), worries about carrying certain comics in stores and never-ending debates on the problems of censorship, real and perceived, on the comics scene.

Here, in our irregular department, Thought Balloons, we'll present commentary from various comics creators. Coincidentally, strangely and hypocritically, even as censorship is discussed, certain four-letter words can't be printed in their entirety here, due to STARLOG PRESS publication policy and certain mailing regulations. Censorship truly does begin at home.

Sergio Aragones

The talent behind Groo the funny barbarian is a familiar Mad man, Sergio Aragones. Best known for those two works (Mad & Groo), Aragones is something of a media celebrity (Laugh-In). And he's philosophical about the comics scene.

COMICS SCENE: Why should an adult who hasn't paid attention to comics for years pick up a comic book today?

SERGIO ARAGONES: We write for ourselves, we don't write for children—we write for *everybody* and you don't have to be a kid or a grownup to buy comics. You have a sense of adventure, or sense of humor, that's all it is. If you like adventure, you read comics; if you like humor, you read comics. They are done by the best artists around.

Half of them aren't done with any particular age in mind, and some are done especially for adults, with sex, with nudity, very modern, very adult with subjects too complex for children to understand.

Censorship has never been in Europe, except when they have a certain political attitude, but in general, they don't have the problems we have here, so they don't understand. The United States is supposed to be the bed of freedom and everything, but there's this censorship if they show a nipple in a comic book. In France, it's normal, nudity; here in television, they cut everything, so why not comics? I think it's a very logical concern.

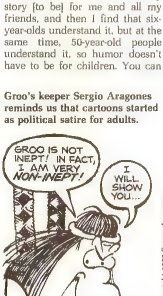
CS: Your comic book *Groo* seems, from the art, since you have a very Bigfoot style, to be aimed at children, but it is clearly not. How would you address that?

ARAGONES: Well, you just gave the answer yourself. You say Bigfoot for children because you read in your mind that you see humor, you think it is for children, so you have a pre-thought, that if it's funny, it's for children. No. Adults read humor also all over the world. I'm very glad that children like *Groo*. I would like my story [to be] for me and all my friends, and then I find that six-year-olds understand it, but at the same time, 50-year-old people understand it, so humor doesn't have to be for children. You can laugh at any age. And Bigfoot? It's a way to call cartoons to differentiate them from a more realistic superhero thing.

CS: Humor in American cartoons was almost always for adults for years and almost always in the Bigfoot style.

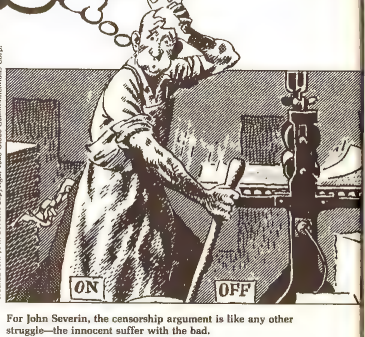
ARAGONES: Yeah. Cartoons started politically, so it was for grownups always. There were lithographs, there were etchings, from Daumier to Gruiksbank, to all during the war, all the editorial cartooning, has always been for grownups. Kids don't read them. Now when they make the comic strip, they start aiming for adventures for children, but humor has *always* been for everybody. The moment you stop reading humor, that means you're taking life too seriously and you're missing something. It was never felt just for children, it's always for everybody who has to see life with a little humor in it.

—Bill Warren



Groo's keeper Sergio Aragones reminds us that cartoons started as political satire for adults.

Groo Art: By & Copyright 1987 Sergio Aragones



Cracked Art: John Severin/Copyright 1986 Globe Communications Corp.

For John Severin, the censorship argument is like any other struggle—the innocent suffer with the bad.

John Buscema

There was a difference between the color and black-and-white versions of *Conan*," says John Buscema, who drew both incarnations of Marvel's Robert E. Howard-inspired barbarian. "Of course, anything can be overdone. I don't mind a naked girl in a story. If it's done tastefully, I don't see a problem.

"There has to be a certain amount of control, but not from outside, from some joker who doesn't know a story from a hole in the ground. There ought to be something internal at the company—a set of editorial guidelines. Some guys, if you don't put a rein on them, would be doing pornography. They would say, 'So what?'

"There's nothing so terrible about a man and a woman making love—*if* it's done tastefully. As far as I'm concerned, I'm more worried about the violence. There were some things that writers included in *Conan* stories that I wouldn't draw. There's enough violence in the world without making things worse in the comics."

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

Howard Chaykin

F–k censorship," says writer/artist Howard Chaykin. "Make that, *please* f–k censorship. In the nicest possible way. *Black Kiss* [*CSQ* #4] will get me in deep enough shit as it is; I didn't want to give it any more rope. My publisher wrung his hands in embarrassment and despair before asking me to change some panels, and I said, sure, no problem. They're all chronic masturbators anyway. Censorship, schmensorship. It's a publisher's right to do *anything* he damn well pleases, but almost all the big successes in the last few years have taken publishers by surprise. They have no right to tell us what's good or bad. They have *no* idea."

—Jami Bernard

Black Kiss Art: Trademark & Copyright 1989 Howard Chaykin Inc. & Vortex Comics Inc.

John Severin

As a longtime worker in the comics field, John Severin remembers the first days of the Comics Code Authority. "Some of the things that went on at the beginning of the Comics Code made you think there were a bunch of old maids up there," Severin says.

"There were all sorts of rules—you couldn't show a knife blade, for example. So when a person got stabbed, all you saw was a clenched fist. Well, damn it, there has to be a knife in that panel somewhere!

"I don't think we need censorship from outside. If the editors, writers and artists are people with morals, then they'll know the lines they can't cross. Of course, there will always be some—in any field—who won't recognize those lines.

"The problem with censorship is that you can never just censor the bad people, you also censor the good ones—and that never works."

Patrick Daniel O'Neill

Steve Englehart

Steve Englehart's brief involvement with *The New Guardians* ended when, he explains, "I ran into severe censorship problems with DC. I was running into minor censorship problems all along, but I was getting tired of having to fight all the time to do the book we had agreed I was going to do.

"*The New Guardians* was a chance to take a diverse group of characters who aren't usually the stars of superhero books, and let them try to deal with the powers they had in the world that we really know—but the world we really know turned out to be too much for DC," he says.

"When I got into the book, I specifically asked about two things: Could I do my homosexual character and get involved in an AIDS storyline? And could I do politics? I was assured I could do both of those, and then I found out I couldn't do *either*," says Englehart.

"I was eventually able to do Gregorio [the homosexual character], but I got a lot of opposition from DC. At one point, they were going so far as to say, 'Well, we thought he was *cured* at the end of *Millennium*!' Which shows a lack of comprehension about a gay character.

"We're in the middle of a presidential election. We tried to make some references to that, and ran into political censorship, I thought, 'I can continue to fight this, or I can put my energy someplace else.' I was sorry to see it [departing *New Guardians*] happen, but I sleep much better not having to worry about it."

—Kim Howard Johnson

DC's thinking that Gregorio was cured of his "problem" after *Millennium* was just one of the reasons why Steve Englehart left *The New Guardians*.

New Guardians Art: Joe Staton/Trademark & Copyright 1988 DC Comics Inc.

When Anniversaries Beckon!

Turning 400, Thor strikes a mighty blow to resolve a devastating God War.

Marvel's mightiest face their greatest challenge—their own milestone issues!

By PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL

After several decades, it has come time to refurbish the legends. Heroes are polished up, their origins renovated, their powers redefined, their supporting casts slashed, their adventures reformulated. The result is something new—and something old, with a nostalgic dash of what's considered the best of the past.

At Marvel Comics, the heroes have survived their fair share of alterations. And now, with the issue numbers of their respective titles edging ever upward, Captain America, the Mighty Thor and the Avengers face changes both major and minor as they mark Marvel milestones.

For the Avengers, it's time again for a new membership roster. "The team reforms in [writer] Walt Simonson's image in *Avengers* #300, an 'Inferno' crossover," Mark Gruenwald, both Marvel's executive editor and *Avengers* editor, reports.

"The new team will consist of Thor, Captain America, Reed and Sue Richards, and the Eternal known as the Forgotten One, who will sooner or later be known as Gilgamesh," Gruenwald details.

Since the Avengers has always been noted for its changing roster, it's only fitting that matters change once more in issue #300. "It's one of the *strangest* rosters yet," Gruenwald laughs. "One-half of the original Fantastic Four, a character that few people have thought about in years, and Cap and Thor as the mainstays.

"The gist of it is that Captain America reorganizes the team, which fell apart in his absence. He has his own ideas as to how to get the Avengers back on their feet and working, so the team will never be on the ropes as it was in recent issues. He wants to set it up so that what happened recently can never happen again."

OK, so Captain America reorganizes the Avengers. Is that *Steve Rogers* or somebody else? After all, regular readers of *Captain America* know that the government had forced Rogers to abandon his heroic identity, giving the costume to a man named John Walker. Rogers eventually developed a new identity known simply as The Captain.

"That's a good question," says Gruenwald, who writes Cap's series. "In *Captain America* #350, Steve Rogers and John Walker will have a lengthy battle that determines who gets to wear the red, white and blue. It has been 18 issues since Steve was forced to surrender the uniform. Many things have happened since then, but the two characters haven't met yet. They've come close recently, but in #350, we'll see it happen.

"We'll also resolve the storyline with the Commission on Super-Human Activities in America, what their grudge was with Steve Rogers," he adds. "It has been going on for 18 months, and that's long enough. It will set the stage for a return of *a* Captain America to the Avengers."

Additionally, the issue will include the retold origin of the Red Skull, courtesy John Byrne (see page 26).

"I've been writing *Captain America* for not quite four years—which is also something of a record, except for Stan Lee," Gruenwald notes. "Steve Englehart and J.M. de Matteis both did 36-issue runs, and I've just surpassed them. For better and for worse—and believe me, my critics say for worse; I've been getting a *lot* of bad mail about the John Walker replacement—I have left an imprint on the character of Captain America."

Is *Thor* up to #400? Gee, I guess we ought to do something special for that," jokes Tom De Falco, Marvel's editor-in-chief, the writer on *The Mighty Thor*. "We were planning a 'Thor goes to lunch' issue—we may have to postpone that."

Turning serious, De Falco reports that #400 will include a number of surprises. "The main story is the conclusion of the God War saga. Ron Frenz and I tend to be heavy on action, and we intend to continue that tradition. We'll learn the fate of the Asgardian gods, the Egyptian gods, Thor and a few other guys.

"Then, we have a bunch of features," De Falco continues. "A 'Tales of Asgard' with Fandral and Volstagg, 'When Volstagg Was in Flower'; the definitive arm-wrestling battle between Thor and Hercules—'When Warriors Clasp'—which is about as serious as you think it is; a four-pager on Thor's hammer titled "If You Knew Uru', pin-ups of the women in Thor's life and all the people who've wielded the hammer; and a Loki story."

Despite his exalted position at Marvel, De Falco says he didn't plan to be writing *Thor* at the time of this celebration. "The fact that I'm writing issue #400 is just the luck of the draw, *not* any master plan.

"I got onto this book by a twist of fate. Ron and I were looking for a book to do," De Falco recalls. "[Editor] Ralph Macchio asked us to do a fill-in on *Thor*. We knew two books were open, *Daredevil* and *Fantastic Four*, but Ralph asked us to do another *Thor* fill-in, and then we sort of took it over. We passed on the *FF* because I didn't want to try 'cosmic' and I wound up doing the God War in *Thor*.

"All that was before I became editor-in-chief. After I was promoted, we had already done four or five issues, so I figured, why fire myself?" ■

All Captain America, Thor & Avengers Characters & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1988 Marvel Entertainment Group

Captain America #388 Cover Art: Kieron Dwyer/Al Milgrom

Steve Rogers and John Walker will finally have a star-spangled slug-out to decide who'll carry on the mantle of Captain America beyond issue #350.

Avengers #300 Cover Art: John Romita/Tom Palmer

The "strangest" Avengers Assemble for #300: (clockwise) Captain America, the Invisible Woman, Mr. Fantastic, Thor and Gilgamesh the Forgotten One.

Thor #400 Cover Art: Ron Frenz/Bob Sharen

Catching Garfield by the Tale

By BOB MILLER

Look what the cartoon cat is dragging in every Saturday morning—and it isn't lasagna.

Garfield the cat may have dreaded reaching his 10th birthday this year, but he did have cause to celebrate. His comic strip appears in more than 2,000 newspapers worldwide in 26 languages. He has had 30 books published, seven of which appeared simultaneously on the *New York Times* bestseller list, setting a world record for his creator, Jim Davis. The corpulent cat's likeness sells some 3,000 products. He has starred in seven TV specials, three of which earned Emmy awards. Three more specials are in the works, as well as a feature-length motion picture, *Garfield's Judgment Day*.

It's no wonder, then, that CBS wanted this popular feline for a Saturday morning TV show. However, Jim Davis also wanted TV exposure for his other newspaper strip, *U.S. Acres*. When the network agreed to include *U.S. Acres* in the new series, Davis agreed to let *Garfield* get up early Saturday mornings.

The problem was, there's only one Jim Davis. Burdened as he was with two daily comic strips, writing Garfield's primetime specials and overseeing his characters' licensing, Davis had no time left to write a weekly TV series. Davis didn't think anyone else could write *Garfield*, so he shelved the project.

But CBS found a writer they felt would please him: Mark Evanier. A prolific comics scribe, Evanier has written the Warner Bros. and Disney cartoon characters for Gold Key, Marvel's Hanna-Barbera comics, *Blackhawk* for DC, and *DNAgents* and *Crossfire* for Eclipse. In cartoons, he has scripted *Trollkins*, *Wuzzles* and *The Littles*, story-edited *Richie Rich* and developed and scripted *Dungeons & Dragons* for Marvel Productions. And in the live-action area, Evanier served as head writer for the *Krofft Superstar Hour* and as a story editor on *Welcome Back, Kotter*.

Before CBS offered him *Garfield*, however, Evanier had been thinking of leaving animation.

"I was doing a project for CBS, which I was very unhappy with," he explains, "because I felt there were concerted efforts by the people involved to force the show into being a commercial, to the detriment of the creative content. When that experience ended, I told CBS that I was *very* disgusted with trying to work network properties like this, that there were no existing ideas for cartoon shows that I wanted to work on, and that I probably wasn't going to do any animation for a while.

"And they said, 'Well, how do you feel about *Garfield*?' And I said, 'I don't want to have anything to do with... Did you say *Garfield*?' "

A big fan of the strip with a collection of all the books, Evanier was captivated by the opportunity to work on the cat. He wrote some scripts that pleased Davis, and he was subsequently hired to be the show's principal writer.

"Jim flew me to Muncie, Indiana, which is where he lives," says Evanier. "We discussed Garfield for several days and he gave me some criticisms of the first few things that I wrote.

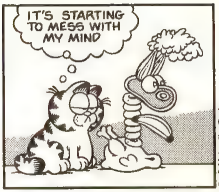
"So, he was willing to trust me to do it. Well, I recognize the enormous responsibility because that's this man's baby. It's like he's giving you his kid and saying, 'Here. Take care of it.'

"I felt an enormous devotion to the character that I've never felt when dealing with most of the other properties that I've done. Many times in this business, you get handed things which the people handing them to you regard as commodities. I've been offered shows to write, and with the people hiring me, the idea was just, 'Oh, we can make some money doing this show. Quick, do it *any* way you want.' They didn't care. And if the people hiring you don't care about the character, why should you?"

Although Garfield is accustomed to loafing around, he got the jump on other Saturday morning stars in production lead time.

Garfield Characters & Art: Copyright 1978 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

Evanier is writing most of the *Garfield* episodes, with the remaining ones scripted by Sharman DiVono. Her credits include writing the Bruce Lee and *Star Trek* newspaper strips, the graphic novel *Samurai: Son of Death* recently published by Eclipse, and some of the new Tom Swift novels from Simon & Schuster. She has also contributed scripts to *Transformers*, *G.I. Joe*, *Droids* and *ABC Weekend Specials*. Her work on *CBS Storybreak* ("Hank, the Cow Dog") impressed the network and Jim Davis enough to hire her.



"Cabin Fever" will explore the effect of food deprivation on Garfield.

"I feel that it has been an honor, a privilege and a real experience to work on *Garfield*," she announces. "You know, writing someone else's character is different than writing your own, and so there's a give-and-take when you're working with someone who has invented a very strong character with a life of his own, like Garfield. Jim Davis knows what he wants, and he has a very *specific* vision about it."

On both the Saturday morning series and primetime specials, Davis supervises all phases of production, directing voice sessions, approving outlines, checking storyboards and the completed scripts and making sure the shows remain true to his characters.

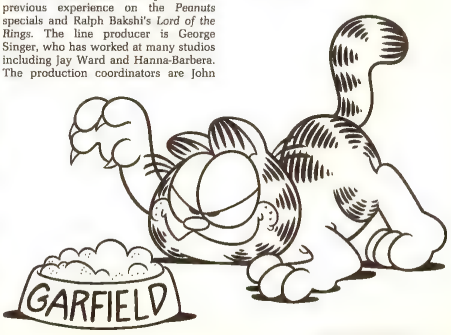
Film Roman, the studio which animated the *Garfield* specials, is also animating *Garfield & Friends*, with assistance from Wang Productions in Taiwan. The show's producer (and studio head) is Phil Roman, a two-time Emmy winner for Best Animated Special, with previous experience on the *Peanuts* specials and Ralph Bakshi's *Lord of the Rings*. The line producer is George Singer, who has worked at many studios including Jay Ward and Hanna-Barbera. The production coordinators are John Cawley, who performed the same duty for *An American Tail*, and Liz Aguiar, formerly with Marvel Productions.

With the footage he has seen so far, Evanier contends the animation is better than the norm for Saturday morning, almost indistinguishable from the primetime *Garfield* specials.

"For most of the animation that you get on Saturday morning, they grab whatever studio is available and work them as fast as possible. If we were starting production on the show tomorrow, we would have to run out and get *any* animation firm that was available, regardless of their quality. Because we had the lead time, we were able to make a deal with the firm we wanted and to get their top people put on the show, not just whomever was available. It isn't a question of how many cels as it is the skill of the people.

"Also, it depends upon how much you send them," he relates. "If you send them just a few model sheets and very rough storyboards, then they must improvise a great deal. Many shows that you see on

"Make it funny and make it *Garfield*," was the extent of the instructions Evanier received on this catty project.



It was the cat's classiness that drew Mark Evanier back into animation to handle Jim Davis' baby.

Saturday morning look bad not because the [overseas] animation firm did a bad job, but because they were handed almost nothing in a rush or in an attempt to save money on this end.

"We're giving them very tight layouts, very tight model sheets, very meticulous instruments because we're all very obsessed with how Garfield looks, and we want to maintain that certain look.

"With the possible exception of *The Wuzzles*, *Garfield* is the *only* first-class Saturday morning operation I've ever been involved with," says Evanier. "Many of the other shows that I've worked on haven't been as good as they could have been given the circumstances—the timing, the budgets and such. But in this case because of the long lead time and because Jim Davis has been very insistent upon quality control, we have no excuses for the episodes not being good other than the limits of our own abilities."

Ah, but what about network interference? The best-laid plans of cats and men can be waylaid by the network tampering with storylines, censoring material and having shows "written down" to the audience, as frequently occurs on Saturday morning.

According to Evanier, this was *not* the case with *Garfield*.

U.S. Acres will fall under the more traditional Saturday morning talking animal shows albeit "a little weirder" promises Evanier.

"One of the nicest things you can do sometimes is to leave people alone," Evanier says. "That's what CBS did with *Mighty Mouse* and *Pee-wee's Playhouse*. They largely left those people alone because Paul Reubens knows what he's doing with Pee-wee Herman and Ralph Bakshi knows what he's doing with Mighty Mouse. The network is *not* going to tell Jim Davis that he doesn't know what's right for *Garfield*."

As for *U.S. Acres*, Evanier describes it as "a more traditional talking animal cartoon show. It's also a little weirder. With *Garfield*, the goal was to match the humor level of the strip and the primetime specials. With *U.S. Acres*, we had a more inventive area where we could do things a little bit stranger."

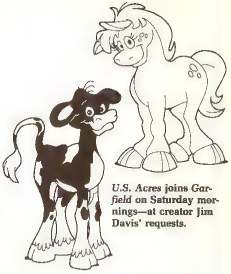
Gregg Berger voices Orson, the pig who leads the barnyard animals of *U.S. Acres*: Roy the rooster (voiced by Thom Huge), two chicks named Booker and Sheldon (Frank Welker), two sheep named Bo (also Welker) and Lanolin (Julie Payne). Then

there's Wade the duck, who Evanier thinks steals the whole show.

"The voice of Wade is being done by Howard Morris. It's one of the greatest performances I've ever heard on Saturday morning acting. He plays this craven duck who's always screaming and ranting and raving. It's very funny watching Howard—who has more energy than anybody I've ever seen in my life—act his character."

"Fortune Kooky," scripted by Sharman DiVono, is about Wade believing what he reads in fortune cookies, and what happens when Roy the rooster plays a joke on him with the messages.

U.S. Acres will be sandwiched between two seven-minute *Garfield* stories, with



U.S. Acres joins Garfield on Saturday mornings—at creator Jim Davis' requests.

Can flabby fuzz compete with cuteness? Find out when Garfield and Nermel enter a cat show to decide who's "Best of Breed."

two 30-second "blackout" skits to round out the show.

Once again, Garfield will be voiced by Lorenzo (*Rhoda*'s Carlton the Doorman) Music. Evanier describes Music as having "a wonderful rich voice that's very unlike the norm for Saturday morning, except for the fact that Lorenzo is on about nine series now. But he automatically dictates a more mature style of humor because the character is very laid back. He talks to the audience all the time; he does break the fourth wall."

The *Garfield* cast is the same as in the comic strip: Jon, Garfield's "owner" (voiced by Thom Huge), Odie the dog (Gregg Berger), Nermel, the world's cutest

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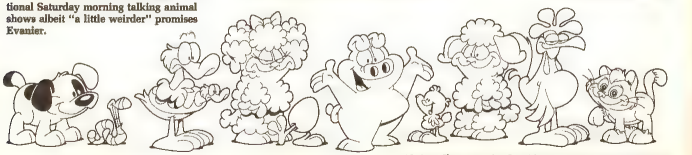

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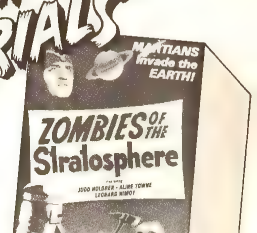

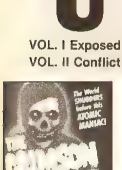

THE CRIMSON GHOST

The Cyclotrode (counter-atomic device) falls into the evil hands of The Crimson Ghost. Professor Chambers must retrieve it before its devastating power is unleashed! Co-stars Clayton Moore (The Lone Ranger).

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Tom Grayson pursues Lightning, a mysterious criminal, and his diabolical weapon, "Thunderbolt," a death-dealing bolt of electricity launched from Wing, his superplane, through eerie tropical jungles, against overwhelming odds.

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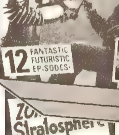

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Beany & Cecil

(continued from page 48)

running out to stop trucks with their bare hands.

"You've got to keep working to improve Saturday morning, to make it a little bit more noticeable, to do shows like *Mighty Mouse* or *Pee-wee's Playhouse*. If you take a chance, you know you're going to get something back."

ABC has scheduled *Beany & Cecil* at 8:00 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, a time when the target audience is little kids who like the fantasy of a boy hanging around with a sea serpent. However, the producers hope the show will appeal to adults as well.

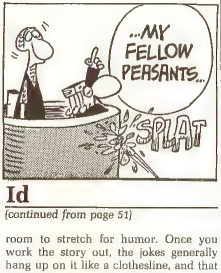
Explains Dini, "Basically, my philosophy has always been if you write something funny, that you really enjoy writing and you really love watching, then many people are going to watch. So you try to make yourself happy, and hopefully, it will have adult appeal.

"The attitude that ABC has on the show, and something we've all been thinking all along, is that if the story is successful enough for kids, if they're able to follow the action all the way throughout the story, then you can load whatever references you want. It's OK to have a few references go over their heads because they're following the action and into the characters. Then, you can use puns, you can do funny sideline characters, and you can do inside jokes because that's good for the adults in the audience."

Dini cites an episode called "The Golden Menu" which has Beany and friends searching for a rare treasure, a huge menu carved in a golden slab that will magically serve anything that's ordered from it. This Golden Menu is located on an island of Amazon waitresses who wear huge beehive hairdos. The Amazons are awaiting the return of the Great Customer, a huge statue that they serve—which happens to look like Captain Huffenpuff.

"The kids will understand the elements of going off on a journey," Paul Dini says, "but the idea of a tribe of Amazon waitresses is very funny. That's going to be a bizarre touch that an older child or teenager or an adult will like."

"It really gives me great joy to continue Bob's work," Sody Clampett says. "And you know, we miss Bob terribly, because he was really a genius. These characters that he created are so wonderful we just felt that they should be continued, to bring many more people much joy, as he had done, and we're going to be as true to them as we possibly can with the budgets and the time to complete them. I'm just pleased that we're able to do that because I know that Bob would have been very happy that we've continued *Beany & Cecil*." ■



Id

(continued from page 51)

room to stretch for humor. Once you work the story out, the jokes generally hang up on it like a clothesline, and that job is made easier for me because the strip is funny and I know what areas to find the humor in. It's a double-edged sword, both easy and hard. They've made it easier for me because I know who the characters are, what the setting is and I have a feeling for what type of humor works."

While Gaty is hesitant to discuss the film's exact storyline—for the simple reason that he's not quite sure of it himself at the moment—he is confident that the film will work, appealing to fans of the comic strip worldwide.

"The *Wizard of Id* is published in almost every country in the world," Gaty notes, "and it has a daily audience of between 80 and 225 million readers. At least there's a great deal of awareness. It has a very peculiar, wonderful, satirical slant on life. The kingdom of Id is inundated with problems we have today. They're broke, the government is taking their money in taxes, they're under threat from another country, there's internal politics going on, and it's a great parallel. The *Wizard of Id* just seems to capture that wonderful slant on our problems and the things we're going through today."

While Hart is confident that the movie is on the right track, he doesn't view its actual making as all fun and games.

"I think in terms of the long range," he explains. "Twenty years from now, I would like people to look at it and enjoy the hell out of it. It should be for children and adults with no swearing and no gore. We actually use *The Wizard of Oz* as a criterion; something really entertaining, with a good story, plenty of entertainment and all the elements. These are not easy to come by, and it takes a lot of work and a lot of good minds to pull it off.

"The enthusiasm and excitement dims when you think about the amount of work it will take to accomplish what we want to accomplish," Johnny Hart concludes. "I look at *The Wizard of Id* as a project that still must be done. When it is done, and it's done the way we like it, then the excitement and enthusiasm will happen." ■

Garfield

(continued from page 58)

kitten (Desiree Goyette, who also composes the music) and Liz the veterinarian (Julie Payne).

A recurring character is Binky the Clown (Huge), who has previously appeared in *Garfield* specials. Evanier describes him as "the loudest, most annoying kid show host in the history of mankind." Binky's stock-in-trade is screaming at the top of his lungs. In "The Binky Show," Garfield becomes a contestant on a game show hosted by the obnoxious clown.

"One of my pet hates in this world is people coming up to you in a restaurant and singing 'Happy Birthday' around the table, yours or someone else's," Evanier says. "So, we did an episode where Garfield has been up all night watching a 14-hour documentary titled *Cotton Swabs: Friend or Foe?* and he's trying to sleep. Binky, who has the wrong house, is pounding on the door trying to serenade Garfield with a few rousing choruses of the Binky Birthday Song."

In one of the first episodes, "Nitey-Nightmare," Garfield overeats and dreams he is growing to the size of King Kong, becoming so large that he starts climbing up supermarkets and cleaning them out.

Other stories include:

"Mad Mutt"—Garfield gets loose in a magic shop. He and a dog chase each other around, doing magical things to one another.

"Identity Crisis"—It's a strange chase as a dog catcher (voiced by Chuck McCann) confuses Garfield with a dog he's trying to catch, also confusing a nearby dog with a local mouse and the mouse with a dog.

"Box O' Fun"—Garfield gets into a cardboard box and imagines it to be different things. He shoots down airplanes and finds himself in the middle of the Indianapolis Speedway.

"Ode to Odie" is totally done in rap by Garfield, a story of how Odie gets involved with a pack of other dogs and gets the lasagna kicked out of him.

One story that may not air until next year concerns Garfield on a TV show, "Lifestyles of the Fat and Furry," hosted by a man who sounds incredibly like Frank Welker's impression of Robin Leach.

"I have no excuses if this show is not good," Mark Evanier says frankly. "I can't blame the animation and I can't blame the voices and I can't blame the network. It's a show that I've been very proud of, and I haven't said that about most shows in the past. I gave interviews about *Richie Rich* and never said those words. I thought *Richie Rich* was as good as we could do under the circumstances. On *Garfield*, we have no circumstances to inhibit us." ■

Scouting SCOUT'S Future

After a six-month hiatus filled by the mini-series spin-offs *Swords of Texas* and *New America*, Tim Truman's White Mountain Apache hero, Emanuel Santana, a.k.a. Scout, returned this spring in a new limited series, *Scout: War Shaman*. "*Scout: War Shaman* is set 13 years after the events told in the original *Scout*," Truman explains. "Scout is now a father with two children. They've been pushed out of the Canyon Du Chelly, where they were holed up. Scout tries to escape all that stuff he was involved with in the original series,

By WILL MURRAY

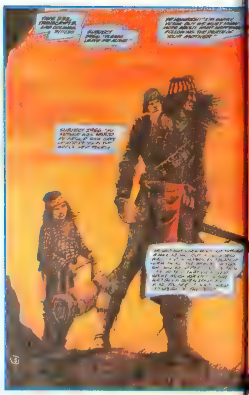
Riding point, Tim Truman searches the horizon for tales of New America.

WHMPH! "BARROW PENSION"
NOT A GOOD SIGN. BUILDING MIGHT BE MARKED FOR DEMOLITION. OR ABANDONED. OR CONDEMNED. OR PROFESSIONAL ARSONISTS.

Scout & All Scout Characters Trademark Timothy Truman

Colors: Sam Parsons

Rosa Winter will be a soulless character, quite different from Scout's old "friend."


WHAT'S THE MATTER, A LITTLE FRIENDLY PITCHED BATTLE?
AUGHHH! HELL, I'M DEAD! DEAD AS A DOORNAIL!
NO WONDER I'M SO HUNGRY. I'M DEAD! I'M DEAD! I'M DEAD! I'M DEAD! I'M DEAD! I'M DEAD! I'M DEAD! I'M DEAD!
AUGHHH! STOP! I'M HUNGRY ALL RIGHT, BUT I'M NOT DEAD! I'M NOT DEAD! I'M NOT DEAD! I'M NOT DEAD! I'M NOT DEAD!
I'M NOT DEAD! I'M NOT DEAD! I'M NOT DEAD! I'M NOT DEAD! I'M NOT DEAD! I'M NOT DEAD! I'M NOT DEAD! I'M NOT DEAD!

Colors: Sam Parsons

Scheduled to run 16 issues, *Scout: War Shaman* will ultimately comprise only the first half of the total *Scout* project, which writer/artist Tim Truman (who discussed his *Prowler* work last issue) estimates will take about 10 years to complete. The series is set in the early 21st century in an America that has fallen into economic and social chaos while much of the rest of the world has gone Communist.

"I've constructed *Scout* so that it would fall into four major works," Truman says. "The first work is issues #1-24 of *Scout*. The second work is the 16 issues of *Scout: War Shaman*. The third is going to be called *Scout: Marauder*, and will actually be the story of Scout's son, Victorio. The fourth *Scout* title, *Blue Leader*, will probably wrap things up. It's a science-fiction retelling of the Book of Revelations."

but during that time, there was a Civil War in the United States. *War Shaman* involves Scout roaming around with his kids trying to see what's left of the United States and then trying to find some place for his children to live."

Santana still has trouble making friends in the new series.

Colors: Sam Parsons

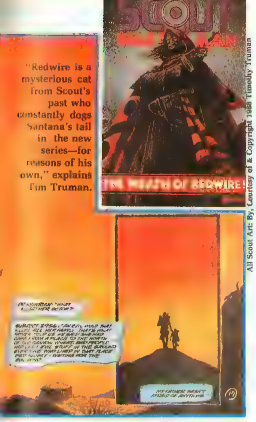
Scout is older and more settled in *Scout: War Shaman*, but he's not the only character who will resurface in the new series showing signs of having gone through changes. Commander Rosa Winter, who became a paramilitary leader during the Civil War epic told in *New America*, is back in a different role.

"She was a sympathetic character in the original series," Truman reveals, "but now she has become a bit of a dictator. She's using means that the reader won't necessarily be able to sympathize with—strong-arm tactics to pull all these settlements together. We did a reader poll asking who their favorite supporting character was, and Rosa was the winner, as a *heroine*. So, this is where we're going to play with the readers' heads. It's a risky thing to do, to turn this character into a seeming villain. But I like to do that in a series, give them a twist that they weren't expecting."

Truman plans to make radical changes in various relationships Scout established in the original series, but the writer's plans for Rosa Winter are by far the most dramatic. He laid the groundwork in the first issue of *Scout: War Shaman*, where now-Commander Winter is seen executing innocent people in an attempt to pacify a rebellious Texas village.

"Scout decides to confront Rosa," Truman relates, "once he learns that she's the one who took over this village. It turns out she isn't too glad to see Scout. She really blames him for most of the things that happened to her—not the least of which being that she's part mechanical now. She seems rather soulless.

"Redwire, who was in issue #2, comes


SCOUT
IN THE HEART OF REDWIRE
"Redwire is a mysterious cat from Scout's past who constantly dogs Santana's tail in the new series—for reasons of his own," explains Tim Truman.

All Scout Art: By Comanche of the Copyright 1998 Timothy Truman

parapsychology and mythology and trying to create a link between the two because they understand that the supernatural is supernatural only as long as it's unexplained. As soon as it's explained, it becomes science. A strong link starts to form between these guys and Scout because it's in keeping with stuff that Scout has gone through during his career. The Hopis find Scout a very interesting person."

Although Truman is reluctant to say whether it's definite, his current thinking is that Scout's alliance with the Hopis will last at least as long as the duration of *Scout: War Shaman*.

"Scout ends up consolidating with these Hopis. They're permanent fixtures as far as I can see right now," the writer says.

And other changes are in store as well, according to Truman.

"Scout is getting a little more science fictional," he explains, "but in keeping with the theme I'm trying to establish in the book, it's speculative fiction wrapped up with mysticism. There are going to be more mechanical elements to it, too."

A prime example, Truman points out, are the Hopi-inspired Katchina androids introduced in issue #5, "Wooly Bully."

"They look really *weird*," he says with pride. "They're very startling when they first come on the page and you find out they're automatons."

Also, Truman intends to explore and codify the reality of New America, pushing it beyond the quasi-*Road Warrior* look it has shared with other post-Apocalyptic series.

back and offers to hunt Scout down for Rosa," Truman continues. "Pretty soon, he's basically controlling Rosa's army. It's going to put Rosa in a position where she might need Scout again, and she'll really have to do some thinking about whether she wants to ask for his help or not. So, Rosa is going to have to put together what she feels about Scout these days."

Scout's quest for a safe haven brings him into contact with three disciples of Doody, the blind boy who taught religion using J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* as his Bible. The Doodyists are trying to reach their monastery which is in danger from Rosa's resupplied army, and enlist Scout's help getting them through the desert.

"In issue #5, we find out that Rosa's army has indeed taken care of the monastery, dealing it a severe and vicious blow," Truman explains. "All this creates strong guilt feelings in Scout that he somehow made it possible. So, he wants to help these Doodyists find their people.

"In the course of looking, they stumble across a Hopi scientific community—Hopi Native American guys who graduated from MIT and came back to their people. They're using their scientific knowledge to help fulfill an ancient prophecy about the Hopi people going underground during bad times. So, they establish this underground community that is heavily science-based, but they're using their knowledge to investigate

Colors: Sam Parsons

As in the old series, mysticism will rear its ugly head. But instead of mechanical antelope monsters, Santana will confront Hopi-inspired Katchina automatons.

"Even though it was set in 1999 and 2003, *Scout* always seemed more 1990," Truman says."So, I'm adapting people's clothes and playing with hairstyles. I've tried to avoid a punk look, which seems the decadent style people go for. I'm trying to get a little more fantastic with clothing. I'm playing with tattoos and stuff like that. I'm still trying to come up with other social characteristics." Despite Scout's new Hopi alliance, don't look for massive changes in the book's wilderness/survivalist feel, although Truman is planning to modify the series' look in this latest incarnation. Nor will there be a sudden story shift to the urban areas of 21st century America.

"I drew *Grimjack* for two or three years," Truman explains wryly, "and I got so burned out on doing entirely city settings. Scout has been *deliberately* placed in outdoor settings. There have been issues set in the city, but I find those less fun to draw. I've been thinking of giving the book a bigger world view and having Scout go to different countries. In fact, he'll probably be going up to Alaska, somewhere toward the middle or the last three-quarters of the series."

But before that happens, Scout will have to deal with a new crisis, one set in motion by another former ally, the Doodyists, and which is expected to carry on until issue #8.

"Scout's youngest son, Victorio, starts manifesting psychic abilities," Truman relates. "The Doodyists see him do some of this stuff and they think he is the fulfillment of Doody's prophecy. If you remember [the first series] *Scout* #14, in the Mount Fire story, Doody was giving this big speech before he was shot, talking about how the bearer of the seed is here among you, but he's not the savior. He's just the planter of the tree—or some B.S. like that. It turns out that when Victorio displays these abilities, it all cinches it with them that Victorio is the giver of life, and they get very interested in him. I don't want to give away what happens, but Scout ends up having to re-examine his feelings about these people. He was very sympathetic towards them, but now he has to figure out what to do about these guys."

Truman has *Scout: War Shaman* plotted all the way to the end, but he's hesitant about revealing where this phase of the *Scout* saga will take the character. 'I don't want to say," he comments. "It's a real shocker." ■

***War Shaman* is part of Truman's Scout saga which will eventually continue as one of Santana's offspring takes the title of *Scout: Marauder*.**

All This & WWIII

Tons of tanks tear across Europe as David Drake and Rod Whigham engage in weekly warfare.

By **DREW BITTNER**

Relations between East and West have broken down following increasingly severe shooting matches in the Persian Gulf. The world is hovering on the brink of war, when the Russian Army crosses the border of West Germany, launching a massive invasion of Western Europe.

You're in a tank company of the U.S. Army, ordered to drive the enemy back, no matter *what* the cost.

Welcome to the Third World War. And welcome to Team Yankee.

Based on the bestselling novel by Colonel H.W. Coyle of the U.S. Army, *Team Yankee* is being released this month by First Comics as a weekly six-issue miniseries and then in November by Berkley Books as a graphic novel, adapted by science-fiction author David Drake and pencilled by Rod Whigham.

The title refers to a tank company, close to a hundred men in two tank platoons and one mechanized infantry platoon (which totals 10 tanks, five armored personnel carriers and two tank-killers), located somewhere in West Germany.

This team is commanded by Captain Sean Bannon. Others featured in the series include Bannon's lieutenants, Uleski and Garger, and their commanding officer, Lt. Col. Reynolds.

"*Team Yankee* follows [this] one tank squadron through three weeks of conventional land warfare in Europe," Whigham explains. "It's six issues of relentless fighting, as realistic as we could portray it. It's an accurate depiction of what war would be like."

"I wanted to make something real clear," says Drake. "When people are done with this comic, they're going to be graphically aware that war is a stinking, hideous, messy business."

Drake's real-life experiences gave him a unique perspective on adapting Coyle's book: He served with the 11th Armored Cavalry in Vietnam.

"The characters [in *Team Yankee*] don't mess up *nearly* as often as the folks I knew did, and some of them had more experience than Bannon and company."

In fact, partly because he was an enlisted man, Drake admits that he made the enlisted men a bit more "waspish" toward the military hierarchy Coyle had established.

"One scene that isn't in the novel but that I liked was an old sergeant sleeping on the track, and this young soldier says, 'They're shelling the rear pretty hard. You think they'll hit division HQ?' And the sergeant answers, 'Well, son, so far we've been real lucky. But I don't think we're gonna be *that* lucky.' "

Drake made some subtractions as well as additions. He deleted an entire section concerning the military families' evacuation in the early days of the war because "it wasn't going to advance the plot in any useful fashion and even Coyle sort of forgets about them [Bannon's family] after a while."

However, some things left in the adaptation were undoubtedly unrealistic, but the story demanded them.

"Was Team Yankee too lucky? Good God, *yes*!" Drake confesses. "Russian artillery, everyone agrees, is hideously

This scene isn't in the novel, but its addition allowed Drake to adopt a more "waspish" attitude toward the military.

destructive. The Russians [in the story] are careful to shell after the fact and in the wrong places. At one point in the book, after they've penetrated a very considerable distance, the Russians start shelling the hill Team Yankee occupies. They don't shell the treeline, which is the logical place to hit, but rather fire at the *center* of the hill. The only possible explanation is that if they shelled any of the reasonable places, we would lose!"

As far as running low on fuel and ammunition, Drake admits, "That's another problem Team Yankee doesn't seem to have. In Vietnam, they brought in fuel in 500 gallon bladders, but in Europe, it would be through hostile airspace. I have some serious questions about the logistics of deep-country penetration without refueling, but it's a much more interesting book this way."

Team Yankee is the novelist's first experience writing comic books. Drake's works include the futuristic mercenary series *Hammer's Slammers*, contributions to both the *Thieves' World* and the *Heroes in Hell* anthologies and editorial credit on *The Fleet* and *Starhunters* anthologies.

Drake had no contact with comic books as an adult and very little as a child. However, he remembered enough of the war comics from his childhood to want to make *Team Yankee* something different.

"I remember things like Sgt. *Rock*. They were all 'budda-budda-budda,' all machine guns firing," Drake says. "The tank moves up and the soldier, totally unafraid of being run over, throws a grenade through the conveniently open hatch. It doesn't work like that—not in real life and not in *Team Yankee*."

Yet even with his experience, Drake notes that he was surprised when Berkley editor Beth Fleischer offered him the job of adapting Coyle's book into a comic.

"My first instinct was to say no, but Beth was called away from the phone before I could do that. That left me time to think, and I thought that it was a new and different kind of experience, and that I could fit it in somewhere on my schedule. When she came back, I said I would do it," Drake explains.

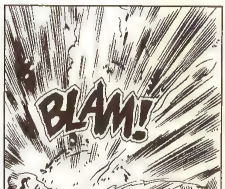
The only limitation imposed on him, he comments, involved language. Specifically, how profane could the soldiers be?

"They thought it over and decided they want the thing in general distribution, instead of under the counter, so they said not to say certain words. The original script got a little bowdlerized because of that, but then I thought about it. I have some friends who speak Russian and Polish. There are a couple of scenes with the enemy soldiers talking, so while the American soldiers don't say anything too improper, I got to be scurrilous in Russian and Polish!"

According to writer David Drake, readers will be "graphically aware that war is a stinking, hideous messy business."

There will be some use of atomic weapons in the storyline, becoming the cliffhanger which would lead into the series' final issue, but Drake adds that nuclear weapons and their aftermath are *not* a major focus of the story.

"I *refuse* to write nuclear holocaust books," he says. "Nobody will be running around shooting mutants and living on canned food, which is what people seem to think. I find the whole idea entirely *sickening* and I believe people *should* be sickened by it. The first two pages of issue #6 will get the point across."



Both Drake and Whigham speak highly of the other's contributions to the project.

"He [Drake] broke this novel down into clear, straightforward short stories," Whigham says. "He also has a well-developed visual sense. He gave me a prose version of the story, and it became my job to visualize it. I had free rein on this book, lots of room to be as creative as possible."

"I think the pages of Whigham's art are damned good," Drake says. "If I put it there, he drew it. If I asked for a panel of pink with a tank blowing up, an infantryman carrying a belt of ammunition and trailing his intestines, it was on the page! If I were to do this again, I would be *delighted* to work with the same artist."

Rod Whigham, whose earliest professional desire was to "become Walt Disney" and who has recently left Marvel's popular *G.I. Joe* series, explains that *Team Yankee* is definitely different from anything he has ever done.

"*G.I. Joe* is a cartoon adventure series," he notes, "and not close enough to reality to be considered war. *This* is the most realistic, hardline book I've ever done, a more straightforward, two-fisted approach."

Whigham believes *Team Yankee* will

Attempting a filmic approach, Whigham "pushed" himself on the book. Drake calls the artistic results "damned good."

stand out because of its extremely realistic approach to the material, but admits he had difficulties coming up with enough different angles on the weapons to make the tank battles interesting.

"It became difficult to find ways to convey weight and impact," he explains. "I tried to get a very filmic approach to this book."

Drake provided a large number of references for the research Whigham had to do, which the artist confesses was the most demanding aspect of the work.

"The research was as meticulous as I could stand to make it," Whigham says. "It's important to the people who will see it. I might put the wrong antenna on a tank, but that kind of error isn't for lack of trying.

"I did a great deal of photographic research, using 15 to 17 books on uniforms, equipment and so on. It was more exhausting than anything else [in the book]. I took advantage of *everything*. I watched old movies of World War II, and saw a PBS special about tanks in West Germany. Hopefully, it'll all be on the money."

Whigham became involved with *Team Yankee* when he met with First Comics' art director Alex Whld at a comics con.

"I had just left *G.I. Joe*, taking some time to go away and fix up some stuff I had. I met Alex and showed him some of my work. He picked up that I had a fair amount of skill with technological things and said he might have a project. He got me in touch with Rick Oliver, who told me I was one of a few artists up for *Team Yankee*. I did a couple of pages for them to show Coyle, who still had some doubts about selling the comic rights to his book. He looked at my stuff, seemed surprised and pleased and gave us the OK."

The artist also confesses that *Team Yankee* challenged him in ways no other book had. "I pushed myself on this book," he says. "I got to play with it and learn from it. They gave me a very free rein, and in this business it's easy to get hemmed in. The only way to get better is to try things that are hard."

All Team Yankee Art: Bill Whigham/Copyright 1988 First Publishing/Berkley Publishing

Whigham's next assignments promise some unique challenges of their own: He has become the regular penciller on DC's new *Doc Savage* series (which Denny O'Neil discussed in CSQ #2), as well as a new Epic book called *Tomorrow Knights*.

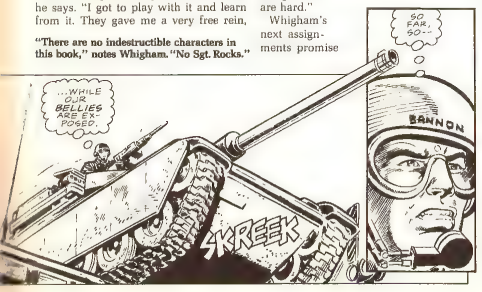
"*Tomorrow Knights* has some of the same aspects as *Team Yankee*," Whigham says. "The story is about mercenaries in the future. Maybe down the road, I can do something with air warfare in World War I, which was really one of the last great romantic ages."

If war generations ago seems more romantic, Drake's and Whigham's vision of the next war is far from it.

"There are no indestructible characters in this book," Whigham promises. "No Sgt. Rocks. It's a straightforward, honest look at war, and the reaction so far has been *much* more positive than I would've thought."

But who wins World War III? According to David Drake, "War is such a hideous human tragedy—if you *survive*, you've won." ■

"There are no indestructible characters in this book," notes Whigham. "No Sgt. Rocks."



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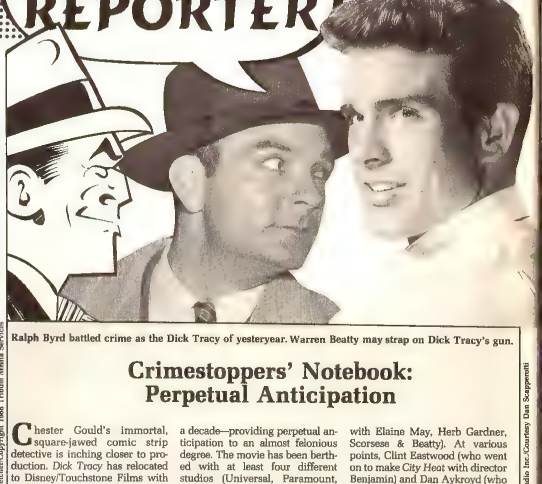


Ralph Byrd battled crime as the Dick Tracy of yesteryear. Warren Beatty may strap on Dick Tracy's gun.

Dick Tracy Character ® & © Tribune Media Services, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Chicago Tribune-New York News Syndicate

Byrd Photo: Copyright 1987 RKO Radio Inc./Courtesy Dan Scapperotti

The Comics Screen

These comic book/strip/pulp/radio/cartoon characters are bound for another medium: movie, TV, animation, even Broadway. The following list is by no means complete and will be continuously revised. *All* projects are live-action unless otherwise specified. Those marked by an asterisk have had a significant change since previous listing. **Attn: comics & media professionals:** Clarifications and other information to be added to this list are cheerfully invited. Send it to COMICS SCENE, 475 Park Ave. South, 8th Flr., NY, NY 10016.

The Addams Family. TV pilot.

The Adjuster. Comic character in development from Marvel & Columbia Pictures TV.

The Airtight Garage. Moebius' SF graphic novel. Animated full-length feature. Co-production between Montreal-based animation firm Productions Pascal Blais & Starwatcher Graphics.

The American. Dark Horse Comics hero. Film or TV series.

American Flagg! Movie. Dick Rosetti, producer.

Andy Capp. Separate British & American TV pilots in works.

Annie. Separate movie & Broadway musical sequels in development. Movie in limbo *again*!

* **Antman.** New World developed script. "Dead."

Archie. Movie. Warner Bros. Director: Joel Schumacher. Archie: Corey Haim. Also (apparently separate) TV movie in development for NBC. Executive producers: Tom Patchett, Andy Heyward.

Babar. *Babar: The Movie*, an animated feature for spring 1989 premiere.

* **The Batman.** Movie from Warner Bros. Script by Sam Hamm. Tim Burton, director. Batman: Michael Keaton. Joker: Jack Nicholson. Filming begins soon. Summer 1989 premiere.

* **Beany & Cecil.** ABC Saturday a.m. animated series. (see article)

Beetle Bailey. Movie.

Betty Boop. Movie. Pierre Spengler, producer. Richard Fleischer (whose father & uncle, Dave & Max Fleischer, created the character) may direct.

Blackhawk. Film.

* **Blade.** Movie based on *Tomb of Dracula* character at New World. Script by Lee Goldberg & William Rabkin. Tom De Simone, director. "Unlikely" to be made.

Blondie. Further half-hour CBS animated special planned.

Brenda Starr, Reporter. Movie starring Brooke Shields & Timothy Dalton. Release delayed by rights dispute.

Bugs Bunny. *Bugs Bunny & Tweety*, hour animated series, on ABC Saturdays.

* **Bullwinkle.** Natasha & Boris Badenov resurface in a live-action comedy *Our Boy Badenov* starring Sally Kellerman & Dave Thomas. Script by Charles Fradin. Charles Martin-Smith, director. Now filming.

Captain America. Cannon Film dead (?). Broadway musical in development.

Captain Teen & Company. Rankin-Bass is developing as Saturday a.m. animated series.

Cathy. Further animated TV specials to appear on CBS.

The Chameleon. New comics character from Marvel Productions & Ohlmeyer Communications TV

* **Chip & Dale.** Star in new animated syndicated series for Disney, *Rescue Rangers*.

Conan. Sequel in limbo.

Copperhead: The Legend of Mongrel. Joint Marvel & Laurel Entertainment project developed by Jim Shooter & George Romero. "Dead," though Romero would still "like" to do it.

Cracked. Superhero parody movie in development.

Crossfire. TV pilot. ABC.

* **Daffy Duck.** "The Duxorcist" & "Night of the Living Duck," new shorts, in release.

* **Daredevil.** TV and movie incarnation discussed. Unlikely at this time.

Delta Tenn. TV series in development by Shannon Tweed to star herself.

DNAgents. Movie. UA.

Crimestoppers' Notebook: Perpetual Anticipation

Chester Gould's immortal, square-jawed comic strip detective is inching closer to production. *Dick Tracy* has relocated to Disney/Touchstone Films with Warren Beatty still on the case as director, producer and (presumably) star. No other information has been divulged, though a more-than-$20 million budget is expected.

Tracy fans and other crimestoppers should stop holding their breath right now: This film project has been underway for more than a decade—providing perpetual anticipation to an almost felonious degree. The movie has been berthed with at least four different studios (Universal, Paramount, 20th Century Fox, Disney/Touchstone) and has involved at least one other producer team (Art Linson & Floyd Mutrux), numerous directors (Mutrux, John Landis, Richard Benjamin, Martin Scorsese, Beatty) and at least three and perhaps as many as five different scripts (drafts by Jim Cash & Jack Epps Jr., another developed with Elaine May, Herb Gardner, Scorsese & Beatty). At various points, Clint Eastwood (who went on to make *City Heat* with director Benjamin) and Dan Aykroyd (who later made *Dragnet* with producer Linson) were considered candidates to wear Tracy's two-way wristwatch.

The actor best known for his performance as the detective remains Ralph Byrd, who patroled Dick Tracy's beat in several movies in the 1940s.

—David McDonnell

Help Cast Judge Dredd

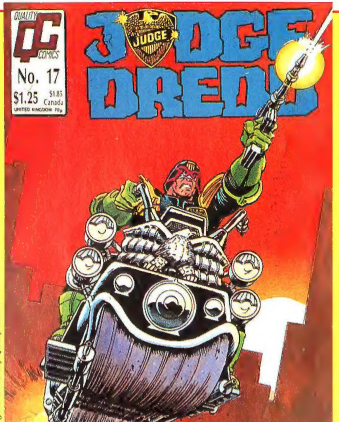
When it comes to the film version of *Judge Dredd*, Charles Lippincott is the law. And this movie producer/marketing specialist (who helped sell *Star Wars* to the world in 1977) has a challenge for all COMICS SCENE readers.

It's simple. Help him cast Judge Dredd.

"I'm happy to hear what the readers think," Lippincott says, "who they believe *should* play Judge Dredd."

For the uninitiated, Dredd is a futuristic hero, who serves as cop, judge, jury and (frequently) executioner in the giant metropolis of Mega-City One. Debuting in 1977 in the British comics weekly *2000 A.D.* (see CS #2, 11), Dredd has since made it to American shores where his adventures are repackaged monthly by Quality Comics. Lippincott, who acquired the Dredd film rights several years ago, is teaming on a movie version with *Conan the Barbarian* producer Edward R. Pressman. Tim [*Hiver's Edge*] Hunter will direct from a script he's co-writing with James Crumley.

Pre-production is tentatively slated to begin next spring for a possible summer 1990 release. And Lippincott is currently investigating some innovative technology which could be used to create Dredd's science-fiction world. But the special FX aren't really what concerns the producer most, it's the casting.



Judge Dredd Art: Copyright 1990 Quality Comics

Who will wear Judge Dredd's battle helmet on the screen? You can help decide.

"Personally, I think whoever plays Dredd has to be over six feet tall," Lippincott observes. "He must have broad shoulders, a strong chin and a commanding voice. Preferably, the actor should be in his early 30s. And just picture him in a helmet. He'll have to wear Dredd's helmet. That's why several stars turned us down. They don't want to wear a helmet for a whole movie.

"I *do* want to hear what the fans think. It's important to get them involved. The fans, not so much in America as in England, have certainly made *Judge Dredd* a big thing for more than 10 years. They may not always be right, but it's important to hear what they have to say.

"Also," adds Lippincott, "it would be interesting to hear who fans think should play Judge Anderson [Dredd's female colleague] because I would prefer that she not be a 'dumb blonde.' I don't want to get someone like Tanya Roberts; I'm trying to avoid *that* at all costs."

All *Judge Dredd* fans and CSQ readers are thus hereby invited to suggest candidates for both roles (Dredd, Anderson). Send your ideas—by postcard *only* please, absolutely *no* phone calls—to Casting Dredd, COMICS SCENE, 475 Park Avenue South, 8th Flr., NYC, NY 10016. All nominations will be forwarded by CSQ for consideration by the filmmakers.

However, Lippincott does offer two notes of caution. "I don't want any ideas on how we should do the story [or any scripts, plots or treatments]," he warns. "And we've already had fans who've sent us photos of themselves, saying 'I'm really the ideal choice. I've been working out and pumping iron. I would make the perfect Judge Dredd,'" Charles Lippincott shakes his head. "Give me a break!"

—*David McDonnell*

* **Dick Tracy**. Movie. Now at Touchstone. Warren Beatty, director and (presumably) star.

Doc Savage. Movie project reportedly in the works.

* **Dr. Mortalis**. New Jack Kirby comics character created for Empire Entertainment movie. Probably scuttled by Empire's sale.

* **Dr. Strange**. Movie. Script by Bob Gale. "Dead" at New World. May resurface elsewhere.

Dominique Shade. New comics character in development for Marvel.

Donald Duck. Donald cameos in *Duck Tales*.

* **Elektra**. Movie scripted by L.M. Kit Carson & Jim McBride. McBride may direct. In limbo at New World.

Elfquest. Movie in limbo.

* **The Executioner**. Movie. Sylvester Stallone stars. Filming to start soon.

Fantastic Four. Movie in development with Neue Constantin.

The Far Side. Movie version of Gary Larson comic panel. Alan Rudolph, director. Alive Films production.

Felix the Cat. Animated feature, mostly done in Hungary, for New World.

* **The Flash**. Movie. First draft script by Jim Strain, from a story by Todd Holland. Unlikely.

* **The Flintstones**. Movie scripted by Steven de Souza. To star Jim Belushi & Rick Moranis. Joel Silver, producer. For Tri-Star release from Taft Entertainment/Keith Barish Productions. Delayed due to economics & restructuring at Taft.

* **Garfield**. Saturday a.m. series. *Garfield & Friends*, on CBS (includes adaptations of Jim Davis' *U.S. Acres*). Movie, *Garfield's Judgment Day*, also planned. (see article)

The Greatest American Hero. Animated version developed at Stephen Cannell Entertainment.

The Green Hornet. Movie. For Taft Entertainment/Keith Barish Productions.

Hagar the Horrible. Animated CBS special.

Heavy Metal. *Heavy Metal*'s *Burning Chrome*, animated movie based on William Gibson story.

He-Man. Animated syndicated series continues.

* **The Incredible Hulk**. TV movie. Sequels possible.

* **Iron Man**. Movie. Scripted by John Lau. In limbo at New World.

The Jetsons. Movie long in development, Paramount. Gary Nardino, producer.

Jonny Quest. Syndicated animated series. Live-action movie to be written & directed by Fred Dekker. For Taft Entertainment/Keith Barish Productions.

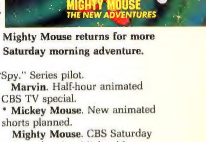
* **Judge Dredd**. Movie. Scripted by Tim Hunter & James Crumley. Hunter will direct. (see item)

* **Lone Ranger**. TV revival projected.

Lone Wolf & Cub. Another live-action film adaptation. Edward Pressman, producer.

Luke Cage & Iron Fist. Movie. Script by Michael Janover.

* **MAD Magazine**. CBS-TV special from Hanna-Barbera airs this season, with animated versions of features like "Spy vs. Spy."



Ralph Bakshi Productions/Courtesy CBS

Mighty Mouse returns for more Saturday morning adventure.

"Spy." Series pilot.

Marvin. Half-hour animated CBS TV special.

* **Mickey Mouse**. New animated shorts planned.

Mighty Mouse. CBS Saturday animated series, *Mighty Mouse: The New Adventures*, continues. Ralph Bakshi, producer. Animated movie mulled.

* **Mindmaster**. New Jack Kirby comics character created for Empire movie unlikely. Probably scuttled by Empire's sale.

* **Mr. Jigsaw**. Ron Fortier-Gary

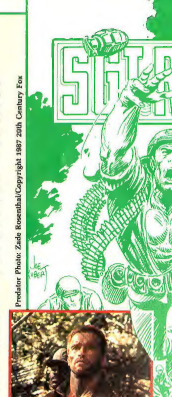
"Sgt. Rock" Goes to War

Vietnam may be a hot commodity at the movie box office, but Warner Bros. apparently believes that World War II can still win over movie audiences, having agreed to bankroll a big screen adaptation of DC Comics' *Sgt. Rock*.

Set to begin production on September 19, *Sgt. Rock* will star Arnold Schwarzenegger, be directed by John McTiernan and produced by Joel Silver, the trio who brought forth last year's *Predator*, and the director/producer team behind this past summer's Bruce Willis action/adventure, *Die Hard*.

"In the old days of Hollywood," explains Joel Silver, "there used to be two kinds of movies: rug movies and dust movies. They said that Cary Grant was the best rug movie actor around, performing in dramas that took place in living rooms. I'm a dust guy. I wouldn't know how to make a movie like *Broadcast News*. I wouldn't know where to start. *The Guns of Navarone, The Longest Day, The Wild Bunch, Lawrence of Arabia*...those are the films that always meant so much to me as a kid. I love the big, epic action pictures, and that's what we're hoping to accomplish with *Sgt. Rock*.

"I think it's great that the genre is viable again," Silver notes. "This summer there has been some talk about action pictures not performing as well as everyone thought they would, but I think that has to do with the quality of the pictures. If the audience responds to the movie, then it works. We had very good luck with *48 HRS.*, *Commando* and *Lethal Weapon*, and hopefully our luck will hold up. But there are two things that will make a movie a hit when it comes out: climate and timing. Those are the magical words, and if you hit the timing and the climate right, then you can go to the Moon."


SGT. ROCK
C'MON, EASY--THERE'S A WAR ON!
Predator Photo: Zade Rosenthal/Copyright 1987 20th Century Fox
Sgt. Rock & Easy Company ™ & © Copyright 1988 DC Comics Inc.

He *could* be Rock of Easy Company. His name is Arnold Schwarzenegger. *Sgt. Rock* is his movie.

John McTiernan agrees, believing that the "fun" element will help *Sgt. Rock* (who's battling Nazis in Italy during winter '44 in the film) win his box office battles as well.

"There's a whole tradition of fun adventure movies," McTiernan observes, "and they all often touch similar beats. The mix of comedy and action really goes way back, and you can even see the same type of thing in *Henry V*. It's an old formula, and when it works, it's very entertaining. Essentially, you're trying to do something fun for the audience, like fashioning an amusement park ride. I can't claim to have any intentions beyond that. You pay your $6 and walk out feeling good.

"In *Sgt. Rock*," McTiernan adds, "we have Arnold Schwarzenegger winning World War II. It's a warm adventure memory, the memory of how our fathers spent the 1940s. This is not hard, gritty reality."

"We're going to be shooting it in America and Europe [specifically Spain]," Silver announces, "and it's just a big World War II, action/adventure picture like *The Dirty Dozen*. I've always wanted somebody to give me the money to make a picture like that, and it hasn't been easy because they're so expensive to make. But I've been lucky enough to have so many movies that have worked that someone said, 'Go for it.' Arnold's going to do *Sgt. Rock*, and I think it's going to be great."

—*Edward Gross*

Gross character optioned for animation by Rankin-Bass.

Mr. Magoo. Movie. Steven Tisch, producer.

Motley's Crew. Sitcom TV pilot in development.

Neil the Horse. Animation/live-action project in development.

Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD. Movie at Paramount. Debra Hill & Lynn Obst, producers.

Joe Palooka. Broadway musical in development.

* **Peanuts**. Animated TV specials continue with four half-hour history-based specials this fall. A second quartet (also historical) airs next spring.

The Phantom. Movie. Bruce Sherlock, Peter Sjoquist, John Torv, Rodney Price, producers. Ken Shadie is scripting. *Phantom* creator Lee Falk is consulting.

* **Plastic Man**. Movie. Don Dante may direct. Different scripts apparently by Charles Gale & Joe Lafia. In development at Guber-Peters.

The Protector. Comics character developed by Marvel & Warner Bros.

* **The Punisher**. Movie. Dolph Lundgren stars. Lou Gossett & Jeroen Krabbe co-star. Mark Goldblatt, director. This $13 (Australian) million film is shooting in Australia. Sequels planned.

* **Reid Fleming, World's Toughest Milkman**. Movie developed by Warner Bros. Now at Universal. To star Jim Belushi.

The Rocketeer. Movie in development at Disney. Bill Dear, director. Script by Danny Bilson & Paul De Meo.

* **Sally Forth**. Sitcom in development at Universal.

* **Sgt. Preston of the Yukon**. TV revival projected.

* **Sgt. Rock**. Movie starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. (see item)

* **The Shadow**. Movie. Scripted by Howard Franklin. Martin Bregman, producer. "Unlikely."

* **The She-Hulk**. Marvel-Viacom TV project "Unlikely."

The Silver Surfer. Animated mini-series in development at New World.

* **Spider-Man**. Cannon Films version. Albert Pyun, director. Filming now scheduled to begin October 30. Animated Spider-Man segments part of *Marvel Universe*.

* **Sub-Mariner**. Script by Joe Brancato & Ted Newsom. Considered "dead."

* **Superboy**. Half-hour TV series slated for October debut. (see article)

* **Superman**. Despite critical response to *Superman IV*, Cannon Films plans *Superman V. Not* viewed as a "certainty." Animated series from Ruby-Spears. (see article).

* **Swamp Thing**. Movie, *Return of the Swamp Thing*. Michael Uslan & Ben Melniker, producers. Jim Wynorski, director. Stars Dick Durock, Heather Locklear, Louis Jourdan, Sarah Douglas.

Tales from the Crypt. Cable series being piloted.

* **Thor**. Spin-off series (from *Hulk* movie sequel) unsold. Animated series in development. Sitcom idea dead.

* **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles**. Animated series debuts in October. (see article) Live-action film mulled.

Tin-Tin. Movie "on back burner" at Amblin Entertainment.

Trouble with Girls. Movie. Godmother Filmworks.

Watchmen. Movie. Script: Sam Hamm. Producer, Joel Silver.

Whisper. Movie. Being developed by Atlantic Releasing to star Vanity.

* **The Wizard of Id**. Movie. Script by Steven de Souza, Dana Olsen. David & Jerry Zucker to direct. (see article)

* **Wolverine**. Movie. Script treatment by Chris Claremont. Considered "dead" at New World.

* **The X-Men**. Animated TV series pilot from New World. Expected to air soon.

Zippy-vision. Movie scripted by Bill Griffith & Diane Noomin, featuring Zippy the Pinhead.

Zorro. Half-hour TV series, *Zorro—The Legend Continues*, co-produced by New World Enterprises & France's Ellipse Programme.

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